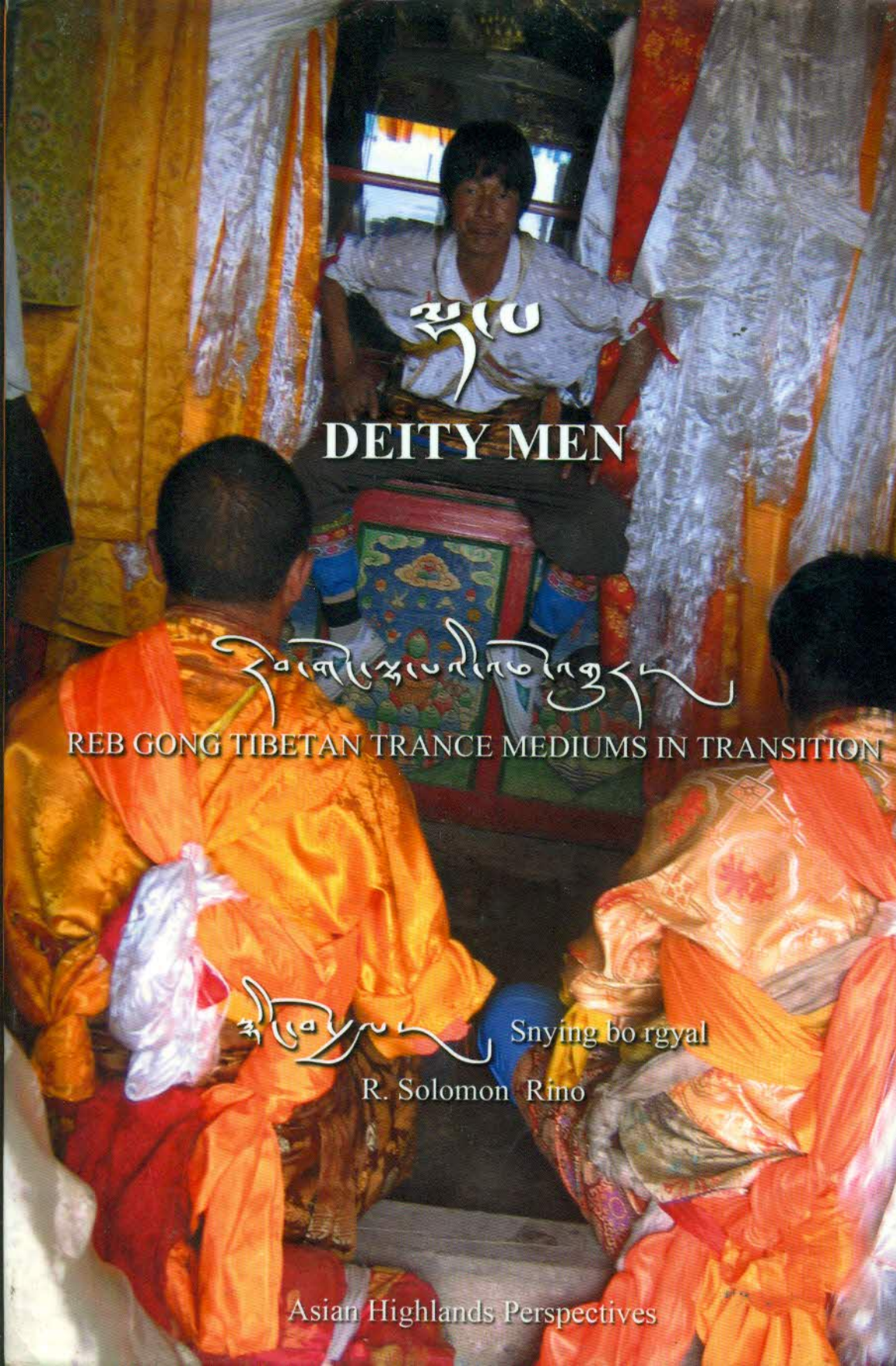


DEITY MEN

REB GONG TIBETAN TRANCE MEDIUMS IN TRANSITION

Snying bo rgyal

R. Solomon Rino

Asian Highlands Perspectives



"The ethnographic data presented here are rich, varied and of great value, both in relation to the comparative study of Tibetan mediumship and to the study of Reb gong itself. Snying bo rgyal and Rino deserve the gratitude of all those interested in Tibetan cultures and societies for what they have achieved."

From the preface by Geoffrey Samuel, Cardiff University

"*Deity Men* is a rare insider's look into the world of Tibet's trance mediums and the deities they embody."

John Vincent Bellezza, Visiting Scholar, East Asia Center, University of Virginia

"This is a fascinating ethnographic study of spirit mediums in Amdo revealing how their activities are being transformed in a rapidly changing world."

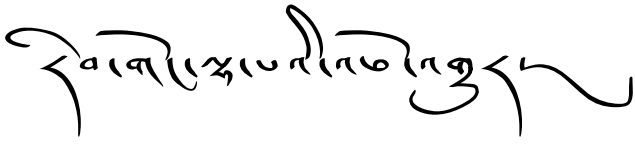
Hildegard Diemberger, Director, Tibetan Studies, Mongolia and Inner Asia Studies Unit, University of Cambridge

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Snying bo rgyal

R. Solomon Rino

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ACCLAIM FOR *DEITY MEN*

This is a comprehensive and extremely informed study of the changing social context and religious lives of *lha pa*, 'deity or god men,' in Qinghai Province, China. Snying bo rgyal and Rino's account of these Tibetan trance mediums who become possessed by mountain deities succeeds in both honoring the past through a detailed description of their practice while acknowledging the increasing challenges to these traditions. This book is an important contribution to the documentation and understanding of Asian ritual and society.

Dr. Mark Turin, Director, Digital Himalaya Project, University of Cambridge, UK

A carefully researched and splendidly illustrated study of a very special Tibetan village and its traditions in the multicultural Reb gong region of A mdo. The focus is on the rituals and religious beliefs connected with the trance mediums called *lha pa*, also known as Tibetan 'shamans.' Based on field observations, interviews, and comparative evidence, this is descriptive and analytic anthropology at its best. The volume includes authentic texts and a glossary.

Dr. Juha Janhunen, University of Helsinki

This is a fascinating ethnographic study of spirit mediums in A mdo revealing how their activities are being transformed in a rapidly changing world.

Dr. Hildegard Diemberger, Director, Tibetan Studies, Mongolia and Inner Asia Studies Unit, University of Cambridge

The *lha pa* of the villages of the Reb gong area have drawn attention from both Tibetan authors and foreign scholars in recent decades, but were often seen only as a marginal part of *glu rol/ klu rol* festivals. Until now the information on them was very limited and stemmed mostly from the observation of the festival, which was then described and interpreted from the point of view of an outer observer. This invaluable book gives space to the voices of local people and *lha pa* intentionally. Containing a large amount of ethnographical data, testimonies and narrations of local people, it draws the reader to their worldview and everyday life in an unprecedented way. It brings down to earth some of the scholarly speculations on the festivals and contains a great deal of new information on Tibetan *lha pa* in general. It cannot be omitted by any researcher on the given area. Congratulations to the authors.

Dr. Daniel Berounsky, Charles University, Prague

The authors, one an A mdo Tibetan, present a rich body of narratives, descriptions and historical details about the *klu rol*, one of the most intriguing and intense series of rituals enacted in eastern Tibet. Extensive testimony is presented from those involved, including several of those who are possessed by local deities during the *klu rol*, along with translations of the ritual texts. This is a rich and valuable resource for all scholars working in the region.

Dr. Fernanda Pirie, Oxford University

In this thoroughly documented study of *lha pa* in three villages of Reb gong County, Snying bo rgyal and R. Solomon Rino collect and present an extraordinarily detailed and rich set of testimonies, observations, and photographs about the setting, rituals, perspectives of and about the trance mediums, and how these are all rapidly changing. The authors choose to minimize their own commentary in order to let the *lha pa* speak for themselves to the fullest extent possible. The painstaking details, including footnotes, Tibetan glossary, village map, and translation of relevant scriptures, will be of great interest to specialists and others interested in Tibetan culture. Among the fascinating topics covered are the *lha pa's* experiences of their own possession and depossession by mountain deities, their self-perception, controversies over authenticity, and the ways in which these practices intersect in unexpected ways with new policies such as the 'New Socialist Countryside.'

Dr. Emily T. Yeh, Department of Geography, University of Colorado

Rich in illustrations and ethnographic detail, this valuable work describes the little-known world of Tibetan trance mediums and their rites from an insider's perspective.

Dr. Mark Bender, Associate Professor, The Ohio State University

Snying bo rgyal and Rino write meticulously about *lha pa* in a way that provides a rich source of data for future scholars.

Dpal ldan bkra shis, Humboldt University, Berlin

This is an extremely lucid and intricately rendered description of Tibetan 'deity mediums,' an important cultural and political phenomenon in the A mdo Tibetan region of Reb gong. The authors' careful translations of interviews with young and older mediums in one village provides readers with a rare glimpse at the shifting dynamics of the once-central institution of deity possession among farming Tibetans in reform-era China.

Dr. Charlene Makley, Reed College

'Deity Men' is a rare insider's look into the world of Tibet's trance mediums and the deities they embody.

John Vincent Bellezza

While possessed by the deity, the trance medium opened his belly with a knife, removed his intestines and placed them on the drum before him. Then, the deity suddenly left him and he was no longer in trance. As he gazed at his organs in shock and horror, villagers hurriedly chanted to re-initiate possession. The deity returned and the medium was able to replace his intestines in his gaping belly, and he did not die.

བཀའ་དྲིན་གཞལ་དུ་མེད་བའི་ཪ་རྒན་མཁའ་བྱམས་རྒྱལ་ལགས་ལ་ཕུལ་བ་ཡིན།

Dedicated to Mkha' byams rgyal



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We would like thank our consultants Sha bo skyabs, Lha lung thar, Sha bo tshe ring, Sha bo rnam rgyal, Mkha' byams rgyal, Rnam rgyal, Lha 'bum rgyal, Snying lcags rgyal, Sha bo tshe ring and Lcags byams who patiently answered questions for many hours. We also thank Dr. Kevin Stuart and Gerald Roche for extensive editorial assistance. We thank Rin chen rdo rje for his assistance in editing Tibetan translation and Sha bo rnam rgyal for filming and photographing *klu rol* for seven days in 2007.

PREFACE

GEOFFREY SAMUEL

The book that follows this preface is unusual and valuable in a number of respects. It has no real parallel in the literature so far on Tibetan spirit mediums—or trance-mediums, as the authors, Snying bo rgyal and Solomon Rino call them. The collaboration of the two authors, one Tibetan and one American, has enabled a very direct and intimate access to how these ritual practitioners see themselves and are seen within their own society. Through encountering a wide cross section of mediums from the village of Ha ra pA thur and two nearby villages in Tho kyA, northern Reb gong, readers learn how mediums and other Tibetans from Reb gong talk about mediums: how one becomes one, what it is like to be one, what mediums do and how they are regarded by others in their society. The narratives in this book give us a sense of the variability and individuality of these practitioners, as well as what they have in common. They also provide valuable material on how attitudes to the mediums have changed, something that has, to-date, received relatively little attention in the literature (though see, e.g., Ortner, 1995 on the Sherpas of Nepal and Diemberger, 2005 on Southern Tibet).

There is now a substantial body of work on Tibetan trance-mediums, spirit mediums, oracles or shamans. Different authors use different terms for these practitioners and indeed the Tibetan terms also vary. Snying bo rgyal and Rino mention a number of these studies in Chapter One and further examples could be added, from all parts of Tibet.[1]

The long distances, low population density, lack of political centralization and variety of modes of subsistence (pastoralist and agriculturalist) in Tibetan societies have led to a high degree of local variation and specificity in many

[1]See Samuel, 1993:290-4 for a partial survey and Diemberger, 2005 for a more recent account focussing on female mediums.

aspects of cultural practice. There is nevertheless a recognizable trance-medium role that can be found across most Tibetan societies. Examples include the Ladakhi village oracles described by Sophie Day (1989) and Amelie Schenk (1993), the *dpa' bo* practitioners from the Byang thang discussed by Per-Arne Berglie (1976, 1982, 1992) and Antoon Geels (1992), the female *mkha' 'gro ma* described by Hildegard Diemberger (2005) and the Reb gong *lha pa* whom we meet in the present volume. A closer examination, such as is made possible by the detailed material presented in this book, enables one to see the extent of local difference across these various regions and communities. The extent of this variation is such that it may be better not to speak of a single, consistent role of trance-mediums across the Tibetan cultural region. It is more a question of a general way of operating with spiritual power that has many local forms.

This also allows us to consider the trance-mediums of Reb gong in a somewhat wider perspective (see also Samuel, 1993:291-4). Apart from the various kinds of people (*lha pa, dpa' bo, mkha' 'gro ma*, etc.) who serve as mediums through whom lay people communicate with local deities, one can also consider the monastic mediums (*sku rten pa, srung ma, chos skyong*), often referred to in the Western literature as 'oracle priests' who are maintained for divinatory purposes by a number of major monastic establishments, such as the famous oracle of the god Pe har who formerly resided at gNas chung near Lhasa. There are also practitioners such as the inspired bards of the Ge sar epic (*'babs sgrung*), or the *'das log,* people who go into a trance state in which they have access to the heavens and hell realms and who then report on their experiences on their return (Pommaret, 1989). Whether one regards all these as part of a general cross-cultural category, for example of 'shamanic practices,' is a different issue and depends in part on the purpose of the enquiry. Snying bo rgyal and Rino note that they have deliberately avoided overtly theorizing their material in the present work, which is a sensible choice, particularly when they are in the

position of being able to present such rich and detailed ethnographic data.

Reb gong itself is an ethnically complex region in the northeastern borderlands of the Tibetan cultural region, with a substantial Monguor-speaking (Tu) population living in separate villages throughout the region and sharing many cultural features with them and significant connections also with Han Chinese culture. While Tibetan society in Reb gong is in many ways integrated into the wider Tibetan cultural sphere, particularly through the long-standing and pervasive presence of Tibetan Buddhism, both in monastic and lay tantric forms, Reb gong is an area with its own very real local characteristics and history. It is not surprising that the *lha pa* of Reb gong (and specifically of the three Tho kyA villages studied here) have both similarities and differences to trance mediums elsewhere in the Tibetan cultural region.

What they have in common, in the first place, is a shared cultural understanding of a world of deities and of modes of communicating with them. As elsewhere in the Tibetan cultural region, there is a real if permeable distinction between the deities of Vajrayāna (Tantric) Buddhism (and the parallel Bon bo religion) and those of the Tibetan landscape. The deities of Vajrayāna Buddhism ultimately derive from the Indic cultural context and dealing with them is for the most part the business of Buddhist Tantric specialist practitioners, above all the lamas, both non-monastic and monastic and the monks who work under their direction. Tantric ritual is complex and specialized, involving the acquisition of sophisticated skills both in ritual performance and, in principle at least, in the control of the practitioner's own mind-body continuum. Even in pre-modern times, most ordinary lay people in Tibetan societies did not have such training. They interacted with Vajrayāna Buddhist deities mainly through short prayers and mantras and through practices such as pilgrimage and ritual sponsorship, in which lamas played a key mediating role. Vajrayāna Buddhism was a source of

power that most lay Tibetans accessed primarily through the assistance of specialist personnel.

The deities and spirits of the Tibetan landscape were and are another question. These deities were omnipresent in pre-modern Tibetan life and, as this book witnesses, they remain significant for contemporary Tibetans. They are of many types, from minor local spirits, through deities of the household (such as the hearth deity) and of streams, rivers and lakes (including the *klu* or aquatic deities, equated with Indian *nāga*) through to the major deities of the mountains. These mountain gods are generally portrayed as mounted warriors and played a key part in early Tibetan mythology, with leading families such as those of the early Tibetan kings claiming descent from them. They retain a martial flavor as well as a strong local identification, with most Tibetan communities having one or more local mountain deities as protectors. Lay Tibetans regularly make offerings to these gods, particularly through the practice of *bsangs*, the burning of a mixture of fragrant woods (especially juniper) with herbs and other substances. Such offerings may be made on a daily basis by householders and also performed collectively on a less frequent basis, in particular as part of major seasonal village rituals. It is mostly mountain gods of this kind for whom the *lha pa* of Reb gong serve as mediums.

There is a hierarchical relation between the Tantric deities of Vajrayāna Buddhism and the local gods of the landscape. The local gods are thought of as less powerful than and subservient to the Tantric deities and as bound in obedience to Vajrayāna Buddhism through oaths and promises (*samāya)* made after they were subdued by the great originating figure of Tibetan Tantric Buddhism, Guru Rinpoche (Padma 'byung gnas, Padmasambhava) or other great lamas of the past. *Lha pa* too are generally thought of as operating under the authority of and with the assistance of lamas, who often play a key part in inducting them into their role as trance-mediums. In practice, though, particularly from the viewpoint of lay people, both local gods and *lha pa* have a degree of autonomy from Vajrayāna

Buddhism. Tibetan lay people may have a personal sense of relationship to the local gods and there are many stories of their interaction in everyday affairs, at times to cause illness and misfortune but also to protect and assist people from their territories. As we see in the accounts in this book, the *lha pa* also have a degree of autonomy from the lamas. In Reb gong, much of the business of becoming a *lha pa* takes place under the management of senior *lha pa* and other villagers, not of lamas and the major village rituals of the *klu rol*, which feature extensively in these pages, are managed primarily by the laity, not the lamas. At the same time, the idiom in which *lha pa* understand their functioning is strongly influenced by Tantric Buddhist ideas (for example in relation to the *rtsa* or 'channels' of the subtle body).

Reb gong *lha pa* evidently, from the pages that follow, fit into these general understandings of Vajrayāna and local deities and of the complementary roles of Tantric and lay practitioners. Some of the more specific features of the Reb gong *lha pa* are, however, also worth noting:

First, the role of the *lha pa* within the village community is distinctive. In most of the existing studies from elsewhere in Tibet, the key role of *lha pa* relates to healing, particularly in relation to the diagnosis and treatment of illness caused by the local gods. There is certainly some discussion of healing in the following pages and it seems that Tho kyA shamans had a significant healing role in the past. The impression given by the material here, however, is that the primary role of Reb gong *lha pa*, at least over the last half-century or so, is not in relation to healing, but to village ritual, in particular the annual *klu rol* festivals that take place in the summer months.[2] The *lha pa* act as channels through which local gods are present in the *klu rol*. They also organize and

[2] Elsewhere in the Reb gong region I understand that there are some individual *lha pa* who engage extensively in healing work (Dawn Collins, personal communication).

supervise much of the performance of the *klu rol* rituals. In certain circumstances, *lha pa* (or, in local terms, the gods who are speaking through them), can also have a significant leadership role within the community. The account here of leadership against the Sog rgya is of particular interest.

Secondly, there is the question of how someone becomes a *lha pa*. There is very interesting material here on this issue. A dominant theme is the need for the village to select a *lha pa*, a process generally carried out under the supervision of older *lha pa* and senior villagers. This contrasts with the more usually reported pattern in much of Tibet where individuals become *lha pa* after an outbreak of 'shamanic illness,' a kind of mental breakdown interpreted as a choice by the deity. This takes place typically in the years of puberty and is resolved when a lama or senior medium diagnoses the problem and takes the young person in hand for training. The contrast is not absolute, since the process of selection among the Reb gong communities described here is in part a question of finding who has the right susceptibilities and abilities to be an effective *lha pa* and in that sense has been chosen by the deity for the job.

The importance of selecting a *lha pa* is clearly related to the need for the community[3] to have a *lha pa* in the context of the *klu rol* and other village ritual. Another aspect here is the question of *lha rgyud* (*lha pa* lineage). We learn that it is normal, though clearly not universal, for *lha pa* to come from families where there have been previous *lha pa*. There are examples of this from elsewhere in the Tibetan cultural region, but the idea seems more developed in Reb gong.

---

[3] I speak generically here of community, but the question of the structure of Reb gong communities is a significant one. Village subdivisions, often lineage-based, evidently have an important role, both in the present account and in other Reb gong studies. It would be useful to have further information about the 'clans' and other groups mentioned in Snying bo rgyal and Rino's account.

A third specific issue in relation to the Reb gong *lha pa* is the strongly male and martial character of the tradition. Reb gong *lha pa*, at least those described here and elsewhere who serve as official village mediums, are all men and the deities they channel are fierce mountain deities. The foundation myth of the Tibetan communities of Reb gong attributes their origin to the coming of a Tibetan army to the area. The significance of cutting with knives, spikes and skewers, both in relation to the *lha pa* themselves and to the young men in the *klu rol* ritual, is striking. 'Cutting' here evidently has a psychological function for the *lha pa*, especially in the context of initiation into the *lha pa* role. As Mkha' byams rgyal notes in Chapter Three, 'Cutting increases the quality of possession. The moment after the *lha pa* is cut he feels frightened. The fear helps him become possessed completely.' The idea that one can be cut, speared or otherwise physically mutilated while possessed by the deity and that the wounds will heal immediately and spontaneously, is clearly also important as a convincing demonstration of the power of the local deities and it underlines their violent and warlike nature. The importance of 'cutting' comes through repeatedly in this book, both as a key element of being a *lha pa* and as a reason why people are unwilling to become *lha pa* or to have their children become *lha pa*.

In relation to gender, it is worth noting that elsewhere in Tibet, village spirit-mediums today are more likely to be female than male, although this was perhaps less true in the past (see Diemberger, 2005).

Finally, I comment briefly on an issue raised in the study: the question of the interpretation of the *klu rol* ritual.[4] Snying bo rgyal and Rino are, I think, somewhat too dismissive of studies such as that of Lawrence Epstein and

[4] A significant study of the *klu rol* not discussed in Chapter One is Katia Buffetrille's study (2004) on the *klu rol* at Sog ru. She has also written on the complex identity of one of the deities involved in the Sog ru ritual (2002).

Peng Wenbin (1998). Epstein and Peng's account, which was one of the first substantial descriptions and analyses of the *klu rol* in a Western language, is, as they make clear, based on limited knowledge, essentially on a single performance at Sa dkyil (Saji) in 1991 and such information as the authors could glean about *klu rol* elsewhere in the course of a research visit not primarily concerned with this topic. In such circumstances, certain factual inaccuracies are understandable. Clearly, it is important to establish as accurate a picture of the ethnographic reality as possible and Snying bo rgyal and Rino are in a position to present a much more detailed and precise account of local perceptions and behavior than was possible for Epstein and Peng.

Snying bo rgyal and Rino go further than criticizing Epstein and Peng's study for inaccuracy, however, and in effect question the right of anthropologists and other scholars to advance interpretations that do not reflect local perceptions. This is I think a misunderstanding of the role of academic scholarship, which is not simply to describe but also to analyze. Such analysis may well reach conclusions that do not concur with the way in which particular behaviors are understood and described locally. People do not always understand what they do and why they are doing it, in any society and the job of anthropological analysis is precisely to uncover what is not obvious, not stated and perhaps not even admitted. I would suggest, following an extensive body of anthropological and other analyses along these lines, that rituals, including those described in this book, work precisely *because* they engage and involve levels of human emotion and motivation that are not part of our conscious awareness and that may indeed be suppressed and unacknowledged.

This does not mean that any particular analysis, whether Epstein and Peng's or anyone else's, is correct, but it suggests caution in attacking an analytical approach simply because it uncovers meanings that local people might deny or reject. In the specific case of Epstein and Peng, it hardly seems implausible that the symbolism of *klu*

rol, with its clear and stereotypical opposition of male and female behavior in the context of ritual dance, is at one level concerned with issues of sexuality and fertility. Such issues, recognized or not, are after all central to the existence and continuity of all human societies.

These comments are not in any way meant to detract from the very real achievement of Snying bo rgyal and Rino's book. If anything, the reverse is true. The value of a work such as this is not simply in the information it gives us, but in the possibilities it opens up for different modes of analysis and of grounding them more firmly and accurately in a detailed knowledge of village practices and understandings. The ethnographic data presented here are rich, varied and of great value, both in relation to the comparative study of Tibetan mediumship and to the study of Reb gong itself. Snying bo rgyal and Rino deserve the gratitude of all those interested in Tibetan cultures and societies for what they have achieved here.

PHOTOS



Figure 1. Thang ga, Ha ra pA thur.



Figure 2. Ru 'og ma, Ha ra pA thur.

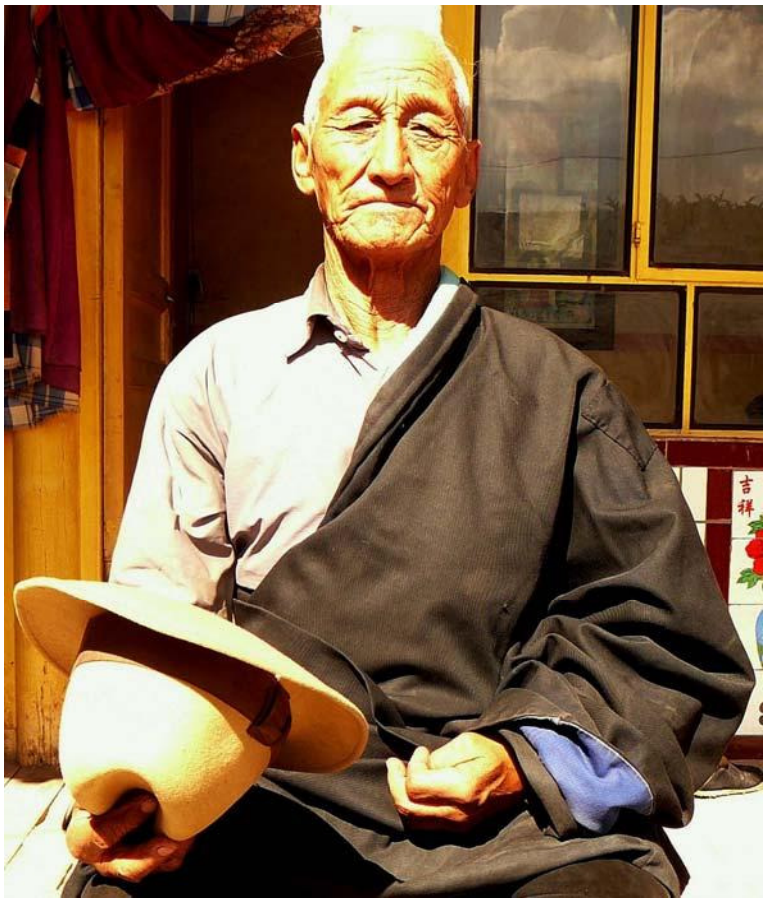


Figure 3. Lha lung thar.

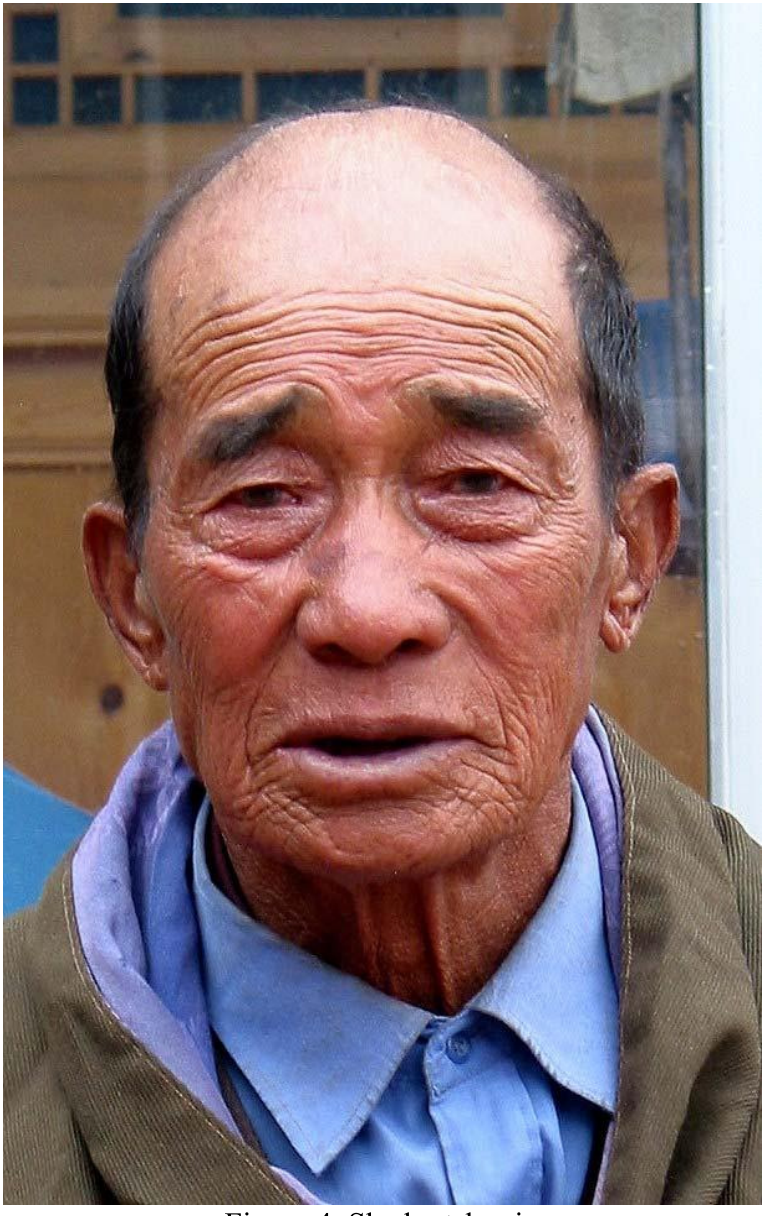


Figure 4. Sha bo tshe ring.

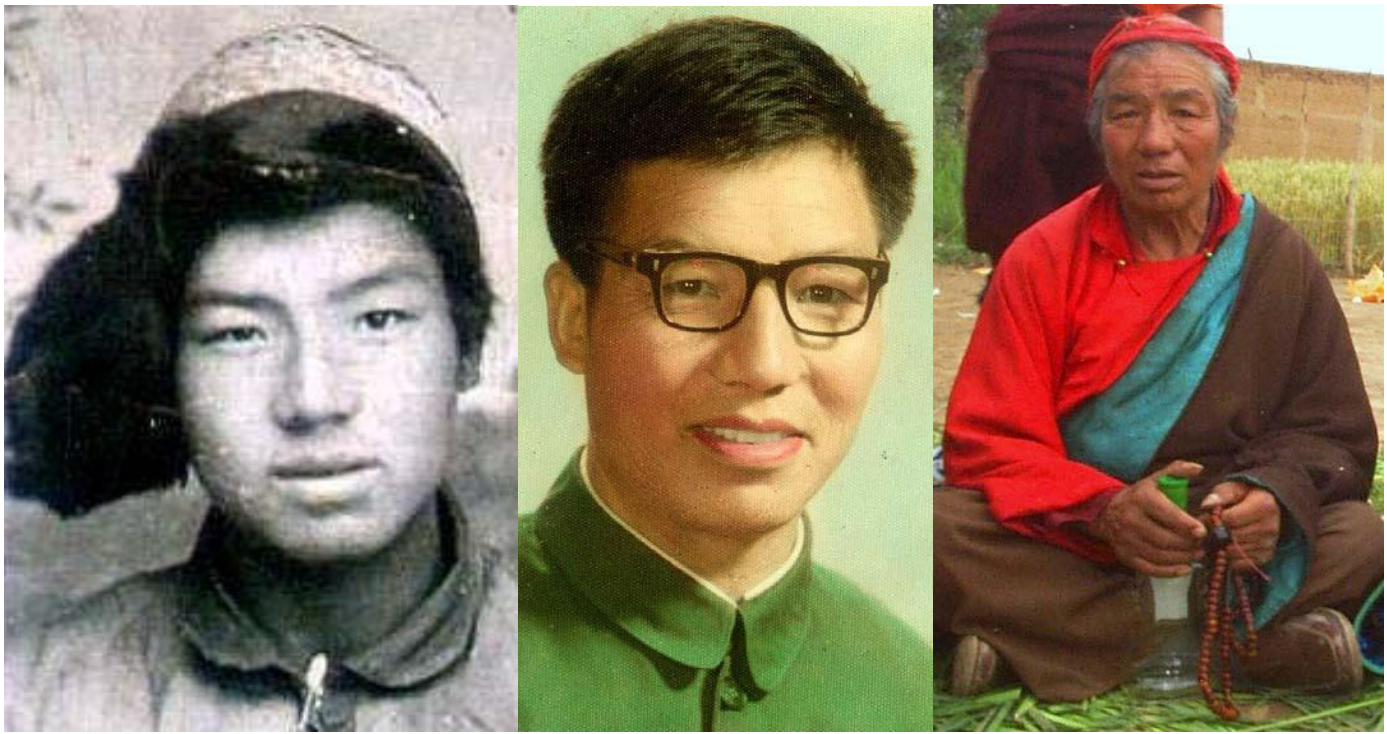


Figure 5. Mkha' byams rgyal in 1958, 1981 and 2005.

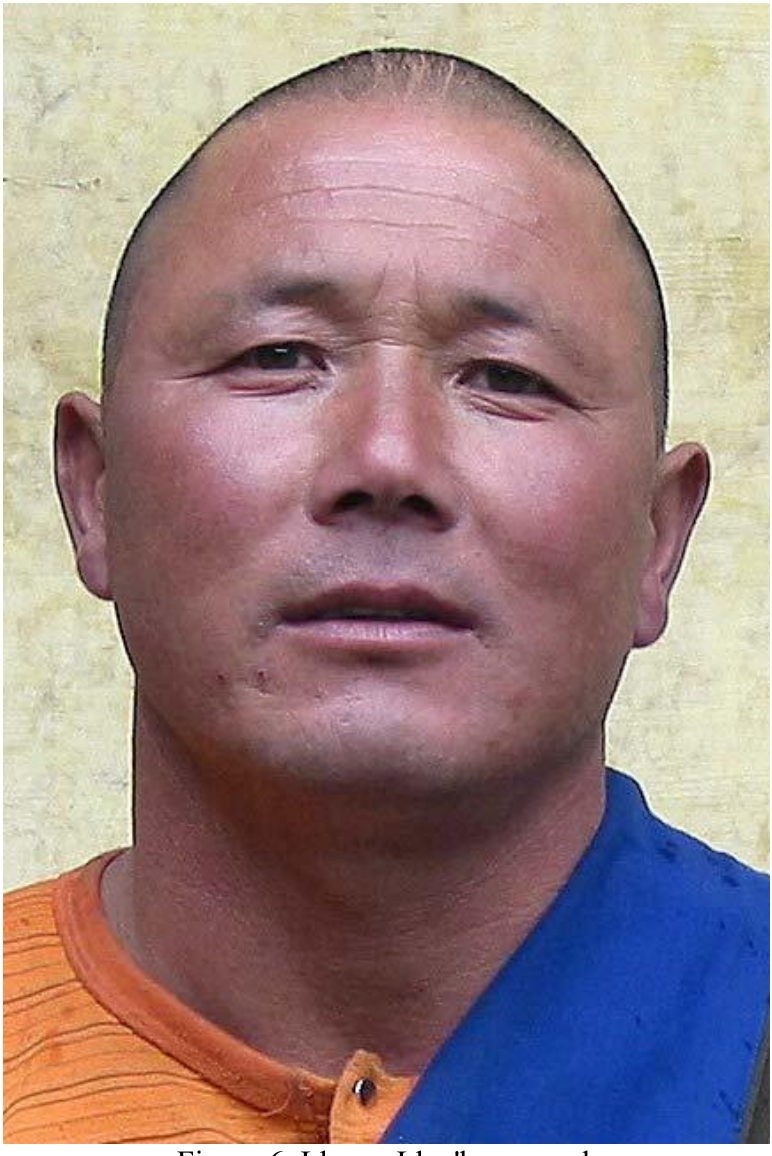


Figure 6. Lha pa Lha 'bum rgyal.



Figure 7. Lha pa Snying lcags rgyal.



Figure 8. Lha pa Lcags byams.

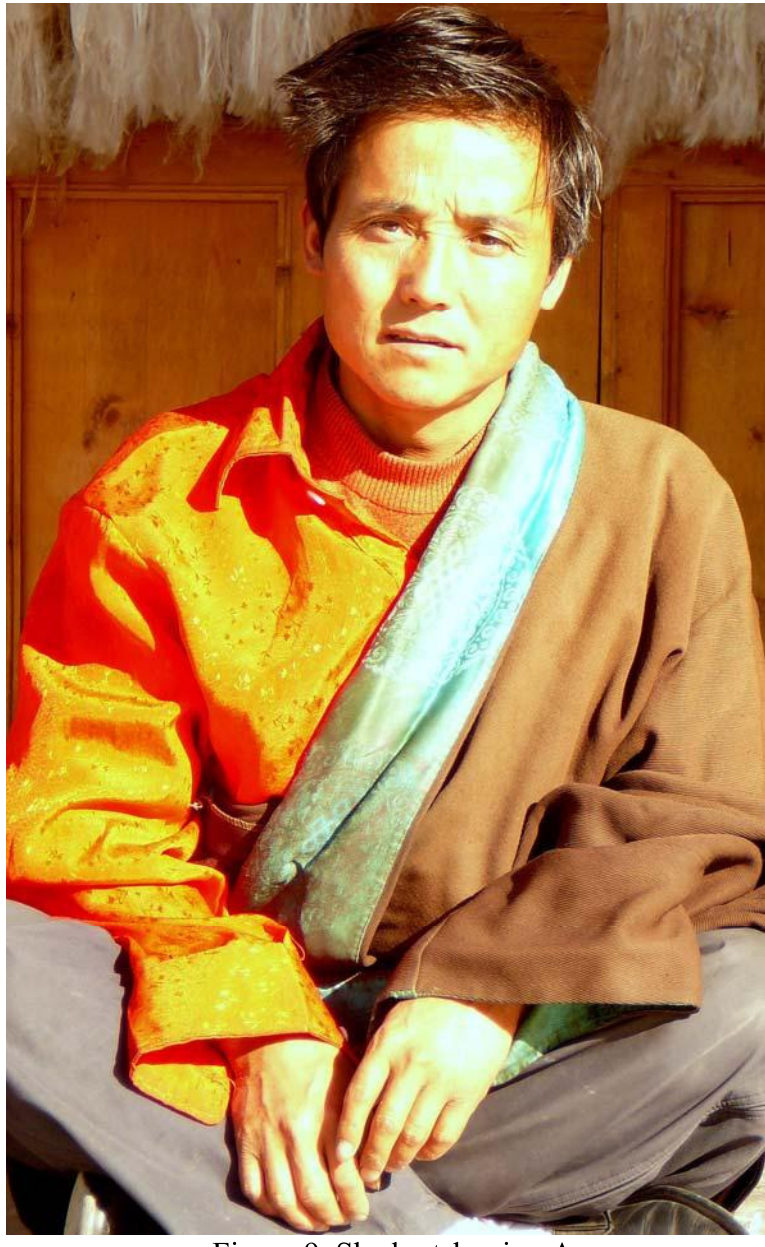


Figure 9. Sha bo tshe ring A.



Figure 10. The new assembly hall in Spen dkar thang Monastery.



Figure 11. The old assembly hall in Spen dkar thang Monastery.

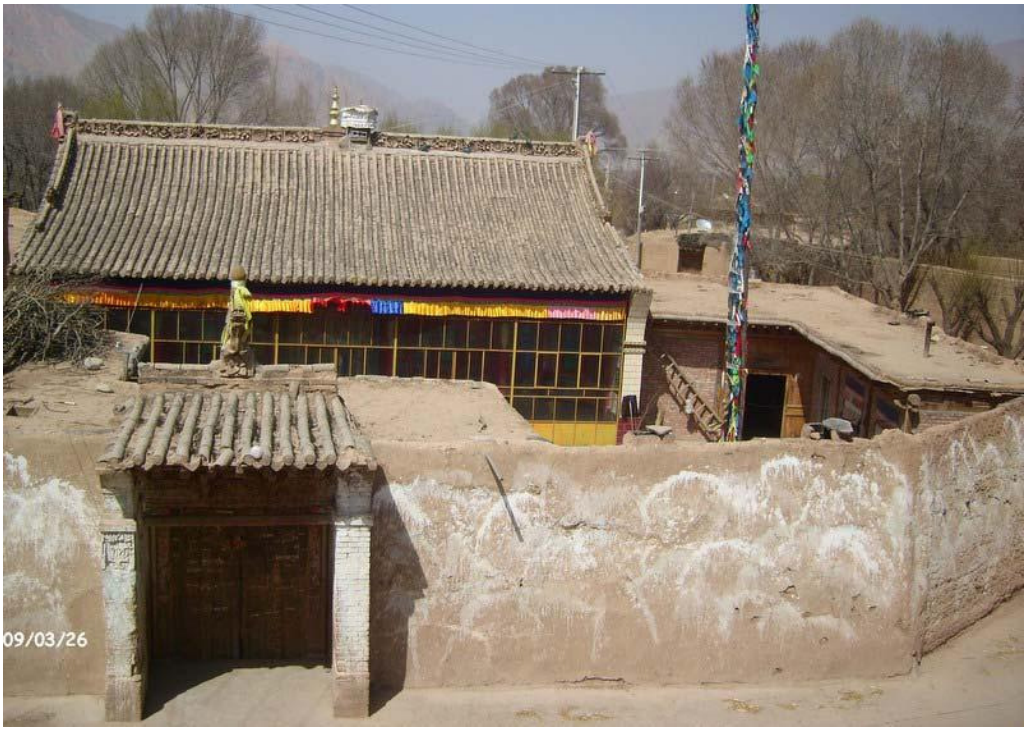


Figure 12. Ru 'og ma *ma Ni*.



Figure 13. Ha ra pA thur *dmag dpon*.



Figure 14. Offerings in the Bod skor *dmag dpon* during *klu rol* in 2008.



Figure 15. Ba rdzong, Dpung nge ri lang and Dar rgya.



Figure 16. Ba rdzong, Dpung nge ri lang and Dar rgya in the Ha ra pA thur *dmag dpon*.



Figure 17. Shan pa ra mgo, A myes Ye mtho and Shan pa rtsi thung in the Ha ra pA thur *dmag dpon*.



Figure 18. Khri ka'i Yul lha.

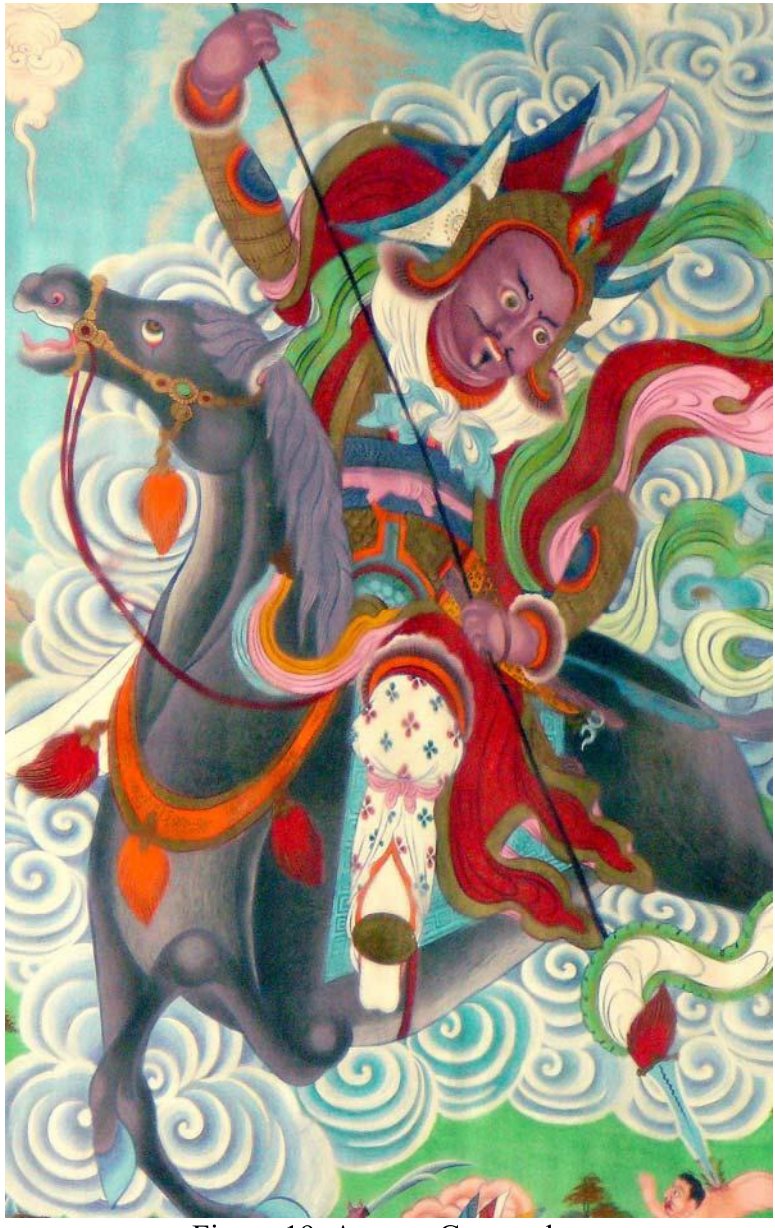


Figure 19. A myes Gnyan chen.



Figure 20. Gsang bdag dregs pa kun 'dul and A ma Sngags srung ma.



Figure 21. Ha ra pA thur *lab tse*.



Figure 22. *Ser tho*.

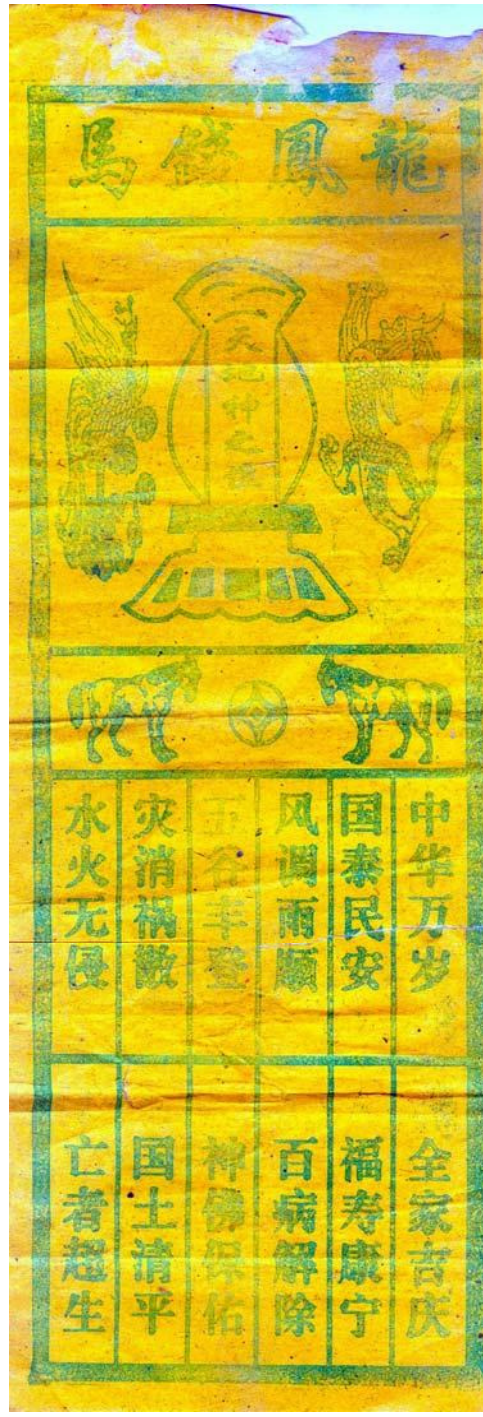


Figure 23. *Glud rta*.

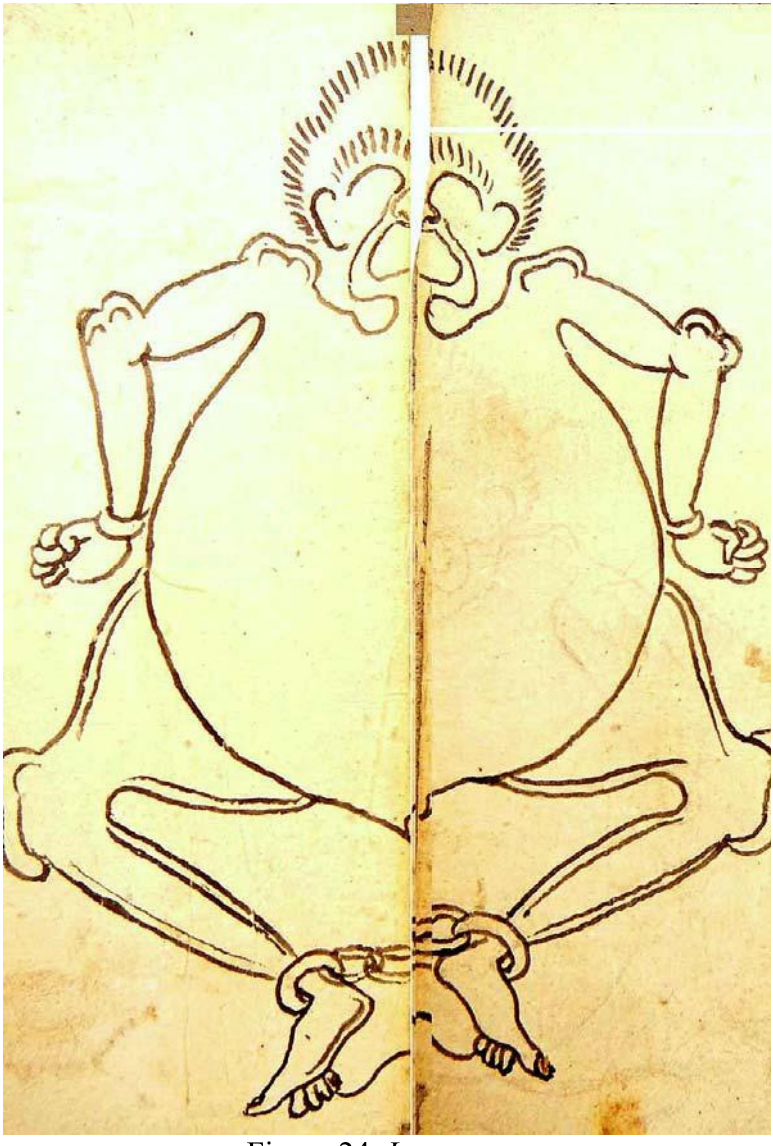


Figure 24. *Lang gzugs*.



Figure 25. *Shing rgyan*.



Figure 26. *Tog lha*.



Figure 27. *Bzlog shog*.



Figure 28. Ha ra pA thur villagers circumambulating a *bsang* burner while chanting *bsang* scripture during *klu rol* in 2007.



Figure 29. Ha ra pA thur villagers performing *lha rtsed* during *klu rol* in 2007.



Figure 30. Lha pa Lcags byams prostrating to the deities during *klu rol* in 2007.



Figure 31. Lha pa Lcags byams awaiting trance during *klu rol* in 2007.



Figure 32. Lha pa Lcags byam receives *snyan shal* from Lha pa Snying lcags rgyal during *klu rol* in 2008.



Figure 33. Lha pa Snying lcags rgyal awaiting trance during *klu rol* in 2007.



Figure 34. Lha pa Snying lcags rgyal offering beer to the deities during *klu rol* in 2007.



Figure 35. Lha pa Sha bo tshe ring stabbing his belly during *klu rol* in 1996.



Figure 36. A Gling rgya *lha pa* who has cut himself.



Figure 37. Lha pa Snying lcags rgyal holding *kha 'bugs* during *klu rol* in 2007.



Figure 38. Lha pa Lha 'bum rgyal piercing a *klu rol* player's cheek in 2007.

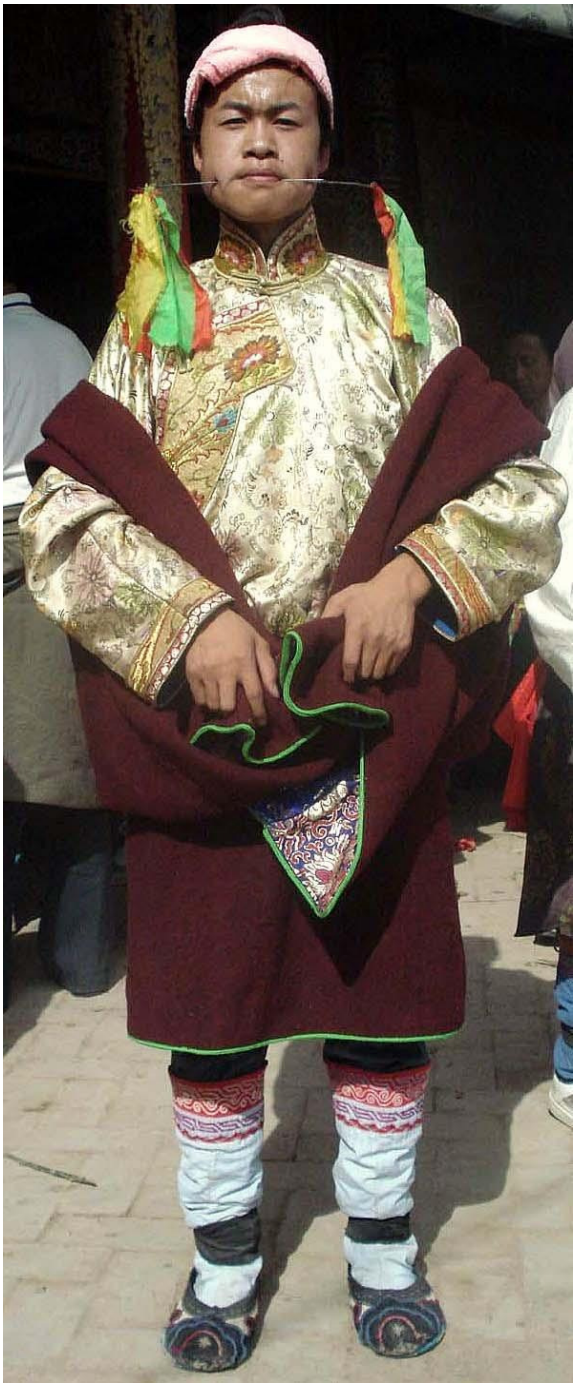


Figure 39. Bod skor *klu rol* player Rdo rje rgyal mtshan in 2007.



Figure 40. Two Bod skor *klu rol* players in 2008.



Figure 41. A Bod skor *klu rol* player in 2007.



Figure 42. Bod skor players performing *lha rtsed* during *klu rol* in 2008.



Figure 43. Lha pa Snying lcags rgyal governing a *klu rol* performance in 2008.



Figure 44. *Klu rol* players resting on the Bod skor threshing ground in 2008.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

In Tibetan communities within and without China are men and women who become possessed by both local and Buddhist deities and act as mediums between these deities, communities and individuals. The mediums are called *srung ma* (Rock, 1935) *chos skyong* (also *chos rgyal* or *chos rje*) (Peter 1978 and 1978a) *sku rten pa*, *sku khog* and *lus khog* (Nebesky-Wojkowitz, 1996), *dpa' po* (Berglie, 1976, 1982 and 1989), *dpa' mo* (Diemberger, 2005) *lha pa* (Stuart, Banmadorji and Huangchojia, 1995; Dpal ldan bkra shis and Stuart, 1998; Nagano, 2000; Schenk, 1993; Bellezza, 2005) *lha 'beb mkhan*/ *lha babs mkhan*, *lha kha*, *lha 'dzin* and *lha zhon* (Bellezza, 2005) and perform such tasks as curing disease, exorcism, divining the will of the gods, governing ritual performance, controlling weather and predicting future events. Bellezza (2005) has shown in his exhaustive comparison that certain similarities are evident among such mediums, and that cross-cultural similarity exists "…embedded in the substrate of cultures distributed over Inner Asia" and even suggests "…that there are indeed deeply buried genetic linkages" (20) in Inner Asian mediumship. However, much variety and local nuance characterizes these mediums' activities. And while the Tibetan medium can be seen as a singular institution, exhibiting a "…primeval impulse, of people becoming gods, [as] one of the pillars on which the Tibetan system of religious beliefs and rituals was founded" (*ibid.*:1) it is through very specific observation of a medium/ mediums in a particular locale that we can understand the great complexity and diversity of this institution.

Such mediums are common in Reb gong[1] (Tongren)[2] County, Rma lho (Huangnan) Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Mtsho sngon (Qinghai) Province, China and are locally known as *lha pa* or 'deity men.' While these men historically have had many functions, which we detail following, their primary role in 2008 was to govern the series of ritual performances called *klu rol*. *Klu rol* was performed throughout Reb gong in the latter half of the sixth lunar month,[3] to please local deities and bring bountiful harvest, health to people and livestock, and general village well-being. This ritual varied significantly from village to village. For descriptions in English see: Stuart, Banmadorji and Huangchojia (1995), Dpal ldan bkra shis and Stuart (1998), Epstein and Peng (1998) and Nagano (2000). Our focus on the *lha pa's* role in *klu rol*, while significant, does not represent the whole ritual. A book length study of *klu rol*, especially one focused in a particular village, would be a welcome addition to the literature.

We describe *lha pa* in Ha ra pA thur (Halabatu) Village, Tho kyA (Bao'an)[4] Town, Reb gong County. After

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[1] Reb gong, Reb kong, Re skong. The region from Skya ga'i nyag ga on the southern side of Reb gong to Gser kha'i nyag ga, which is located at the border between Reb gong and Zhong hwa (Xunhua) on the eastern side of Gling rgya (Brag dgon pa Dkon mchog bstan pa rab rgyas, 1987:341). "Today the Reb gong area includes Tongren County, Rtse khog County, and the southern part of Thun te (Tongde) County of Mtsho lho Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture" (Dpal ldan bkra shis and Stuart, 1998:31).

[2] The Wiley system of Romanization is employed for Tibetan terms followed by Chinese *pinyin* when the latter is important.

[3] Reb gong Tibetans followed the *hor zla* (*nongli*), the Chinese agricultural (lunar) calendar.

[4] Ha ra pA thur belonged to Smad pa Township before 2001, which was established in 1956. The name was

focusing for two years solely on this area, interviewing *lha pa* and villagers there, we hope to give a comprehensive description of: the local *lha pa* tradition, including discussion of some terms used to describe Tibetan mediums and perceived origins of *lha pa*; possession, including personal accounts of possession from *lha pa* and villagers; selection of *lha pa* before 1958, when ritual activity involving *lha pa* largely ceased and after 1980 or 1981 when many *lha pa* resumed their responsibilities; methods lamas used to invest and verify *lha pa* authenticity, including testing the quality of possession and determining which deities possessed the *lha pa*; *lha pa* cutting and stabbing themselves, the finding and removing of curses, the curing of diseases; and such other activities as rain making, storm prevention and animal sacrifice. We also offer accounts of changing perceptions of *lha pa*. New technologies, economies, modes of communication and greater access to education have radically altered the role of *lha pa*, as well as the way *lha pa* have been perceived by villagers. Interviewing people born from 1924 to 1980 has added to the dynamism of this material and reveals that the *lha pa* tradition and role is rapidly disappearing.

This text is sufficiently complex to suggest that focusing on all of Reb gong, or attempting to describe the Tibetan mediums of A mdo[5] (Anduo) or a larger area,

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changed to Hongqi Dui or 'Red Flag Community' in 1958. The name Smad pa was reapplied in 1984. Smad pa Township and Tho kyA were combined and named Tho kyA Town in 2001 (http://baike.baidu.com/view/336849.htm, accessed 11, 2007). Tho kyA also referred to Tho kyA Village and the entire administrative area of Tho kyA. The region was often referred to as Smad pa in 2008.

[5] A mdo is distributed mainly in Mtsho nub (Haixi) Mongolian and Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Mtsho shar (Haidong) Region, Rma lho, Mtsho lho (Hainan), Mtsho byang (Haibei) and Mgo log (Guoluo) Tibetan Autonomous Prefectures, Mtsho sngon Province; Kan

would either be an impossibly vast task, or would require an enormous decrease in detail, thus limiting the value of the material. However, we have also interviewed *lha pa* and elders in Bod skor (Xiazhuang) Village, Tho kyA, approximately six kilometers south of Ha ra pA thur and Dkar rtse gdong (Gadui) Village, Tho kyA, approximately seven kilometers south of Ha ra pA thur. In 2008, villagers believed that these communities were once one village before land was divided between three brothers. Snying bo rgyal's description of the *klu rol* performance *sa bgod pa* 'land division,' performed daily from the twenty-first to the twenty-fourth days of the sixth lunar month articulates this:

> Six players are selected by the *'khyig bdag* group.[6] One pair is one group. They stand in triangular positions inside a circle of other *klu rol* players, each pair holding hands. The inner players walk clockwise and each group calls one of

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lho (Gannan) and Dpa' ris (Tianzhu) Tibetan Autonomous Prefectures in Kan su'u (Gansu) Province and Rnga ba (Aba) Tibetan Automous Prefecture in Si khron (Sichuan) Province.

[6] A group responsible for managing *klu rol* and regulating when grass may be cut on the edges of fields. In 2007, on the fifth day of the fifth lunar month, during *lnga ba'i tshes lnga*, (see the section entitled The Fifth Day of the Fifth Month for a description of this ritual) the *'khyig bdag* made a *ser tho* 'hail effigy,' a two-meter-tall figure with prominent male genitalia (see figure 22). The figure was made of tree branches and placed on Ser tho sgang 'Ser tho Hill.' It held a bow and arrow pointed toward the west. The effigy was thought to resist hailstorms. After the *ser tho* was built, it was forbidden to cut grass along the edges of fields or let animals graze near fields until after harvest. The *'khyig bdag* fined villagers who gathered grass or allowed their animals to graze near fields. The membership of this group changed annually on a rotating basis.

the names of the three villages. The first group yells, "Ha ra du Bya me family."[7]

The second group shouts, "Ga tsi gdong 'Ba' rgya family."[8]

The third group yells, "Bod skor Sum pa family."[9]

The three groups yell, "Ha ra du Bya me family" "Ga tsi gdong 'Ba' rgya family" and "Bod bskor Sum pa family" in turn a second time.

Then the first group shouts, "Ha ra du Bya me family" a third time.

Players in the circle shout, "*'o*" in response.

The first group says, "Land[10]…picture drawn on that day, this land belongs to the Ha ra du Bya me family," while drawing lines on the ground with their forefingers.[11]

The second group shouts, "Ga tsi gdong 'Ba' rgya family" a third time.

The players in the circle reply, "*'o*."

The second group says, "Land …picture drawn on that day, this land belongs to the Ga tsi gdong 'Ba' rgya

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[7] "Ha ra du Bya me *tshang*." Ha ra du was a colloquial name for Ha ra pA thur. Bya me was another name for the village only used in this context. Certain elder villagers believed in 2008 that Bya me was the name of the original owner of Ha ra pA thur territory.

[8] "Ga tsi gdong 'Ba' rgya *tshang*." Ga tsi gdong was a colloquial name for Dkar rtse gdong. 'Ba' rgya was another name for the village only used in this context.

[9] "Bod skor Sum pa *tshang*." Sum pa was another name for Bod skor, only used in this context. It is phonetically similar to one of the five divisions of Dbus gtsang, Sum pa'i ru. See Appendix One line ten.

[10] "*Sa gzhig ma gzhig brgyud pa'i ri mo bris nas nyin ge*, '*di* Ha ra ti Bya me *tshang gi sa yin*." Certain recited words, e.g., ...*gzhig ma gzhig brgyud pa'i* were not understood by Ha ra pA thur villagers.

[11] Indicating a border.

family,"[12] while the second group draws lines on the ground with their forefingers.

The third group shouts, "Bod skor Sum pa family" a third time.

Players in the circle respond, "*'o*."

The third group says, "Land …picture drawn on that day, this land belongs to the Bod skor Sum pa family"[13] while the third group draws lines on the ground with their forefingers.

The three main *gzhi bdag*[14]—Dpung nge ri lang, Ba rdzong ri lang and Dar rgya ri lang[15]—who possessed the *lha pa* in these three villages were considered to be brothers. The villages performed *klu rol* together from the twenty-second to the twenty-fourth days of the sixth lunar month. For all the foregoing reasons we treat the three villages as one village.

To give the reader a more complete picture of the life and ritual present in this unique location, and in the hope

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[12] "*Sa gzhig ma gzhig brgyud pa'i ri mo bris ngas nyin ge*, '*di* Ga tsi gdong 'Ba' rgya *tshang gi sa yin*." Recited as above. Only the village name has changed.

[13] "*Sa gzhig ma gzhig brgyud pa'i ri mo bris nas nyin ge*, '*di* Bod skor Sum pa *tshang gi sa yin*."

[14] 'Base owner' or 'local deity' was a common term for local deities in Reb gong in 2008.

[15] Dpung nge ri lang, Ba rdzong ri lang and Dar rgya ri lang belong to Ri lang *bcu gnyis* 'twelve Ri lang,' or a group of deities all bearing the name Ri lang "To flee, to escape, in exile" (Goldstein, 2001:1035). We are aware of the names Ba rdzong ri lang, Dpung nge ri lang, Sa bdag sog po ri lang, Ko'u mol ri lang, Pe dpa' ri lang, Dar rgya ri lang, Tso shul ri lang, Dmag dpon pi tsi ri lang and Gyen 'dzi ri lang. Both Tibetans and Han in Reb gong considered Ba rdzong ri lang to be the same as the Chinese deity Erlang Ye 'Grandfather Erlang' or Erlang Sheng 'Deity Erlang.' Han residents of Tho kyA made offerings in the Dkar rtse gdong shrine to Ba rdzong in 2008.

that these details might help to humanize people who have never before been well introduced to an English reading audience, we describe the physical and cultural contexts in which *lha pa* and other Ha ra pA thur villagers lived in 2008. Village location, livelihood, history and village names, housing, clothing, food and education are described. This is followed by a description and history of each village clan, deities associated with different clans and clan function in daily life. Religious structures, such as the village monastery, assembly halls and shrine, local deities, and both daily and annual ritual activities are detailed.

We provide translations of scriptures chanted daily in the village and recited as the *lha pa* enters trance. A map of the village shows the location of each home, associated clan and important sites where ritual activity was conducted in both 2007 and 2008.

We have deliberately not overtly theorized our material; instead we have tried to chronicle local ideas about village history and *lha pa*. While such implicit theses will be noticed as: problems of cultural transformation and loss, especially in terms of the role and value of ritual; social alienation and lack of village cohesion due to modernity and socioeconomic change, the function and ultimate value of this text is to present the perceptive, rich, and often surprising observations of local people. As such perceptions are in a rapid state of flux, especially as the generation who clearly remembers life before 1958 passes away, the voices of locals bears certain value. If not chronicled, a way of thinking will disappear and be forgotten. Therefore, while we have provided some contextualization, we have chosen for the most part to offer the rare and fleeting voices of our consultants with limited interpretation.

CONSULTANTS

Name	Birth Death	Location	Occupation	Detail
Sha bo skyabs	1924	Dkar rtse gdong Village.	Farmer.	
Lha lung thar	1929	Lha khang Village, Tho kyA.	Farmer.	Performed as *lha pa* 1948-1956.
Sha bo tshe ring	1929	Born in Gling rgya Village, Tho kyA. Married into Sgo dmar Village, Gnyan thog Township in 1957.	Farmer.	First possessed in 1947. Performed as *lha pa* 1948-1958 and 1980-1999.
Sha bo rnam rgyal	1937	Bod skor Village.	Farmer.	Performed as *lha pa* 1954-1958. Performed once in 1963. Resumed *lha pa* performance in 1980. Retired in 2003.

Mkha' byams rgyal	1938	Ru 'og ma portion of Ha ra pA thur Village.	Former leader, Reb gong Shuibaozhan, 'Water Conservation Station.' Retired in 1998.	First saw *lha pa* perform in 1948.
Rnam rgyal	1941-2007	Thang ga portion of Ha ra pA thur Village.	Farmer.	
Lha 'bum rgyal	1965	Dkar rtse gdong Village.	Farmer.	Dkar rtse gdong *lha pa* from 1986.
Snying lcags rgyal	1968	Bod skor Village.	Farmer and truck driver.	Bod skor *lha pa* from 1998.
Sha bo tshe ring A[16]	1969	Ru 'og ma portion of Ha ra pA thur Village.	Farmer and minibus taxi driver.	First possessed in 1989 but never performed as *lha pa*.

[16] We have placed 'A' after Sha bo tshe ring's name to distinguish him from the other consultant by the same name.

Lcags byams	1970	Thang ga portion of Ha ra pA thur Village.	Farmer. Carved wood blocks for printing scriptures.	Ha ra pA thur *lha pa* from 2001.
Snying bo rgyal	1980	Ru 'og ma portion of Ha ra pA thur Village.	Teacher, Smad pa Middle School. Graduated from Mtsho sngon Normal University in 2007.	

Bod kyi chos srid zung 'brel skor bshad pa (Dung dkar blo bzang 'phrin las, 2004), *Ge sar rgyal po'i sgrung nang gi lha bsang klu mchod kyi skor cung zad gleng ba* (Rnam sras, 1994) and *Mdo smad du dar ba'i drug pa'i glu rol* (Rin chen rgyal, 1989) all cite the following to argue that Padma 'byung gnas was the historical progenitor of the Tibetan trance medium:

> …during king Srong btsan sgam po's reign [617-650], Buddhist practice was inhibited, and there were natural disasters such as floods in 'Phang thang resulting from the overflow of Lha rdzing and Bem rdzing,[17] the collapse of the snow mountain Sham po, famine affecting residents and diseases affecting residents, horses and cattle. Lighting-bolts and fire came to Lha mkhar[18] where Buddhism was being practiced. The king's ancestors died at abnormally young ages.
>
> ...The bed-chamber servant,[19] Lha lung 'tsho zher snyan legs, was appointed the *spra (pra) bstan (rten).*[20] [Padma 'byung gnas] conducted (*pra) sa na pa ta*[21] and ordered [Lha lung 'tsho zher snyan legs] to speak out. [The trance medium] called all the names of wrathful *klu* [Padma 'byung gnas] required: "Sham po[22] sent floods to 'Phang thang, Thang lha[23] sent lighting-bolts to Lha sa, and Bstan ma bcu gnyis caused famine, crop failure, diseases and so on." On

[17] Probably the names of two bodies of water that we could not identify.

[18] 'Deity Castle' likely indicating a temple at the location of the later Potala Palace.

[19] *Gzims mal ba*. Nam mkha'i nor bu replaced *gzims mal ba* with *gzims mal nas* 'in the bedroom,' to indicate the location of possession.

[20] For more information on *spra* (*pra*) *bstan* (*rten*) see the section entitled *Lha pa*.

[21] The ritual for putting *lha pa* into trance. See *lha phab pa* in the section entitled *Lha pa*.

[22] See Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1996:203-204.

[23] See Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1996:205-209.

> the following day, about ten *cho ris bzang po'i*[24] *bu tsha*[25] whose parents and grandparents were still alive were chosen as *pra rten*. Rgyal po chen po bzhi[26] possessed these people and Gnod sbyin me lha showed his face. Pernicious *klu* were put into human bodies, and subdued by Padma 'byung gnas (Sba gsal snang, ND:28-29).

In *Zhang bod lo rgyus ti se'i 'od*, Nam mkha'i nor bu (1996) argues against this origin story by analyzing the term *pra* and tracing it back to Bon tradition. He claims that *spra se na pa ta* is an 'Indian' word. He writes:

> In Indian language[27] *bra se naM* [phonetically similar to *spra se na*] means 'clearly demonstrate.' *Pra* can also mean 'pure crystal.' The whole word [*spra se na pa ta*] means 'to demonstrate clearly as pure crystal' (Nam mkha'i nor bu, 1996:144).

He suggests this argument is corroborated by 'Jam mgon mi pham pa's telling of the Epic of Ge sar. When Ge sar performs *pra phab pa*,[28] he sacrifices to the Bon deity, Phu lber.[29]

Such texts as *Mdo smad Reb gong drug pa'i klu rol gyi cho ga bstar mkhan lha pa'i skor la dpyad pa* (Mkhar rtse rgyal, 2006) and *Bod kyi deng rabs lha pa las 'phros pa'i*

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[24] This term referred to a person who had no relatives who had intermarried for seven generations in both matrilineal and patrilineal lines.

[25] *Bu* may be translated as 'son' and *tsha* as 'grandson.'

[26] 'Four Great Rgyal po' likely refers to the Four Guardian Kings. In Buddhism, there are four deities in the four quarters of this world, Yul 'khor srung in the east, Spyan mi bzang in the south, 'Phags skyes po in the west and Rnam thos sras in the north (Thob. nd.)

[27] The author does not specify which 'Indian' language. We assume he refers to Sanskrit.

[28] Another term for *lha phab pa*.

[29] For extensive discussion of possible origins of Tibetan mediums in Bon tradition see Bellezza, 2005.

gtam (Bstan 'dzin tshe ring, 1998) suggest that both notions are correct. They argue that trance mediums existed before Padma 'byung gnas, who later converted Bon deities into Buddhist ones, and placed them in human bodies.

Mdo smad Reb gong drug pa'i klu rol cho ga bstar mkhan lha pa'i skor la dpyad pa (Mkhar rtse rgyal, 2006) is the sole research paper in Tibetan that has attempted to give an ethnographic description of Reb gong *lha pa*. It gives first person accounts from elderly Sa dkyil villagers and Lha lung thar.[30] The author describes how *lha pa* are chosen, invested by lamas, cure diseases, undergo 'speech opening,' find curses and make rain. He discusses the history and origins of *lha pa* and places them in the larger context of north and central Asian shamanism. While this study contains certain detail and important local voices, the author's title, *Study on Lha pa who Perform the Sixth Month Lurol Ritual of Rebgong in Amdo*, reveals the breadth of the topic the author has attempted to take on. With *lha pa* and *klu rol* varying greatly in Reb gong, this twenty-one page paper is only a preliminary description.

Mountain Gods and Trance Mediums: A Qinghai Tibetan Summer Festival (Stuart, Banmadorji and Huangchojia, 1995) is the first effort in English to describe Reb gong *klu rol* and *lha pa* and is of value in the intimate detail and vivid accounts given about *klu rol* and the specific *lha pa* in the focal village of Lcang skya. The authors briefly introduce Lcang skya Village and associated mountain deities, and detail *klu rol* activity, including *lab tse* ritual activity. An account of *lha pa* possession is given and the lama's role in *lha pa* investment is described. The paper concludes with discussion of the importance of the *lha pa* in village life, especially in times of ritual. The authors write: "Given the enormous variety among Qinghai Tibetans, it is difficult to speak of anything as 'typical' of the regional Tibetan culture, and this is as true of the Laru

[30] Mkhar rtse rgyal refers to Lha lung thar as the Ri rtsa Village *lha pa*. In fact he served both Ri rtsa and Lha khang villages.

Festival as of anything else. To better understand the significance of the celebration it is thus necessary to examine the particular circumstances of the village" (221). This approach of focusing on one specific location, detailing what occurs there at a particular time, without assuming this represents a regional standard, is a vital methodology, as Reb gong ritual activity varies greatly throughout the region.

Perilous Novelties: The Amdo Tibetan Klu rol Festival in Gling-rgyal Village (Dpal ldan bkra shis and Stuart, 1998) maintains the same model of Stuart, Banmadorji and Huangchojia (1995), describing at length the village location, clans, mountain deities and *klu rol* activity, including *lab tse* activity; however, this paper provides more detail, especially regarding *klu rol* activity and origins, mountain deity origins, *lab tse* origins, and *klu rol* performance, including a complete schedule of Gling rgya[31] *klu rol* activity and detailed description of what occurs each day during Gling rgya *klu rol*. The authors provide translations of love songs sung during the festival. Descriptions of the two village *lha pa* include possession and differing qualities of possession according to what deity has possessed the *lha pa*, investment by lamas, 'speech opening' (see the section entitled *Ngag sgo 'byed pa*), and *lha pa* cutting and stabbing themselves. The authors write:

> The very significant differences between …[Lcang skya] *klu rol* when compared to the *klu rol* of Gling-rgyal raise questions begging more research: Why do certain villages celebrate one form of *klu rol* and not another? What takes place in each Reb-gong village *klu rol*? An answer to the latter question is particularly necessary before reliable generalizations are possible about this festival.

[31] Gling rgya Village was six kilometers southeast of Ha ra pA thur.

The questions posed here have yet to be answered and while these two papers provide excellent introductions to *klu rol* there is much that might be added to the literature.

Sacrifice and Lha pa in the Glu rol Festival of Reb-skong (Nagano, 2000) is divided into two sections. The introduction and first section of the paper, *The Reb-skong Area and Descriptions of the Glu rol Ritual*, offers a map of Reb gong,[32] a diagram of the Sog ri shrine and an attempt to chronicle *klu rol* activity in the focus village of Sog ri. The paper also contains many vivid photographs of Sog ri *klu rol* activity. Because little is available on *klu rol* in English, the first section has value in introducing the ritual. However, the paper contains such inaccuracies as:

- referring to Rong bo Town[33] as Rong-po lha sde (569). In fact Rong bo lha sde is a village south of Rong bo Monastery. 'Rong-po lha sde' is not used to refer to the town.
- translating *grong pa tsho ba* as "farm villages" (570). Actually, *grong pa* = all lay people and *tsho ba* = clan/ tribe.
- calling *gar*[34] "*gar ma*" (583) (*gar* = the dance, *gar ma* = female dancer).
- rendering 'tribes' as "*shog kha*" (573) when *shog kha* can refer to many villages and many tribes.
- referring to the Rgyal po Village *lha pa* (577) whereas Rgyal po villagers we interviewed in 2008 could not remember there ever being a Rgyal po *lha pa*.

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[32] Nagano places 'Ja' mo Village west of the Dgu River. The village is actually east of the river, north of Sog ri Village. He also calls Seng ge gshong "Xiazhuang," 'Lower Village.' Xiazhuang usually refers to Bod skor Village.

[33] Rong bo (Longwu) was located 18 kilometers south of Ha ra pA thur and was the Reb gong County Town.

[34] *Gar* referred to both the *klu rol* performance and any local Reb gong performance involving simultaneous singing and dancing.

- calling Sa mchod, Reb tsha, Klu tshang and Dar dmar "villages" (573) when in fact they are clans within Sog ri Village.
- saying "there are villages belonging to rNying-ma-pa, for instance Gling-rgyal" (570) when in fact Gling rgya contains Rnying ma ba, Dge lugs pa and Bon followers.[35]

Furthermore, such sentences as "While all the male participants recite a magic formula, the *lha pa* makes a sign with his fingers …and breathes upon the two kinds of sticks" (589), or "The actors have a spree there for a while and then run away" (588), provide few concrete details and are difficult to comprehend.

The second section of the paper, *Some Observations From a Cultural Anthropological Viewpoint*, is more problematic. Nagano first suggests that as "…the whole village space of Sog-ri is transformed into a microcosm and categorized cosmologically at a structural level" (591), sacred space arises in contrast to secular and intermediate space. He frequently refers to an "Other World" (589) to which the *klu rol* festival provides a communication channel.[36] Nagano categorizes *klu rol* activity and the spaces where this activity occurs according to 'sacred,' 'secular,' 'intermediate' and 'liminal' zones. "…the *lha chu kha* ritual, carried out at the natural liminal zone, the river, is conducted both to purify and to strengthen the guardian deities as well as the villagers through water and *bsang*" (594); "Here the sacred powers of the Other World flow in and out through the *bsang* from the furnace and the *la btsas*

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[35] See Dpal ldan bkra shis and Stuart, 1998:33. It is common for Reb gong villages to contain multiple Buddhist and non-Buddhist sects, as our description of Ha ra pA thur makes evident.

[36] In positing the existence of an 'Other World,' Nagano ignores the local ontological system which divides the universe into human, deity, demi-god, hell-being, animal, and hungry ghost realms.

and they receive offerings through them" and (594); "…this contrast between the 'raw' and the 'cooked' [meat] probably reflects the dichotomy between the 'nature = Other World' and the 'culture = this world'" (595). Although Nagano claims that such activities as making meat and water offerings and burning *bsang* transform the village during *klu rol* from "normal to abnormal time" (591) where "…the *lha pa* prohibits villagers from engaging in daily activities" (591), or creates a "cosmological setting" (591), none of the activities are unique to *klu rol*; these offerings are made daily in Reb gong. Ordinary life for Reb gong Tibetans is steeped in ritual and intimate relations with both local and Buddhist deities, thus it is difficult to see clear delineations between sacred, secular and intermediate zones. For example, to what zones should a woman chanting scripture while kindling a cooking fire be assigned? A man discussing the year's harvest while cleaning *theb tse*? A *klu rol* player standing to have his photograph taken while pierced? If there were a 'sacred zone' for Reb gong Tibetans, would it belong to an 'Other World' or be more closely integrated into everyday experience?

Nagano speculates at length on the nature of *klu rol* offerings and the deities to which the offerings are made. This section is repetitive and frequently posits such conclusions as, "If these sacrifices are a 'substitution' …then what do they substitute for? In my view, they substitute for human life. At the depths of consciousness, the practice of offering valuable property signifies a sacrifice of part of the body of a person, or self sacrifice" (600).

The author then claims that *klu rol* sacrifices can be divided into "the A-type …[where] villagers as the hosts of the ritual, offer sacrifices to gods and expect blessings from them" (603), and the "B-type [which] reminds us of the shamanic rite by possession" (604). Nagano then attempts to support these claims with: "In the time of the ancestor of the Tibetan Kingdom (before the 7th century), we can find the tradition of the politics by a sacred king, who called himself the child of a god. It is said that he went into

ecstasy in the presence of the whole company, going to the heaven, asking the divine will, and that after being awaken, he performed the political affairs on the ground" (605). One hopes for more detail and wonders how this relates to the *lha pa* described, who are not sons of gods, nor do they go into ecstasy, go to heaven, seek divine will, nor perform political affairs outside of trance. Use of non-standard English further obscures meaning.

Nagano states in his introduction that he intends to "search for some aspects of the nameless religion tradition" (567) through *klu rol*. The 'nameless religion'[37] is not mentioned again until he states: "The tradition of communication circuits with gods would probably belong to that of the 'nameless' folk religious rituals" (605). No further explanation is offered.

Ritual, Ethnicity and Generational Identity (Epstein and Peng, 1998) contains a number of factual errors. We will examine three: (1) A basic misunderstanding of local geography. We are told, for example, that *klu rol* is "...performed throughout the vicinity of Repgong and the Gu (*Dgu*; Chinese, Longwu) River valley..." (121) when in fact the Dgu River Valley is part of Reb gong. Similarly, we read: "Repgong ...is part of Chinese Tongren in Qinghai Province..." (184) when in actuality Tongren is the Chinese term for Reb gong. The authors often refer to "Langja and Meba" (133) but Gling rgya is traditionally part of Smad pa,[38] and in 1991, when *klu rol* was observed by the authors, Gling rgya was administratively part of Sma pa Township.

(2) Inaccuracy in the presentation of *klu rol* history: "Folk rituals ...like the one discussed here, were celebrated continuously until the onset of the Cultural Revolution in

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[37] See Stein, 1972.

[38] Villages were grouped into larger bodies called *shog kha*. This grouping was evident as the responsiblity for managing the Rgya lo *smon lam* in Rong bo Monastery rotated from one *shog kha* to another annually. Gling rgya and Smad pa were one *shog kha*.

1966 (or a few years earlier in some areas)" (120). Actually, *klu rol* stopped completely in 1958, resumed for one year in 1963, and was not practiced again until 1981.[39] Furthermore, we are told that "In Saji, the ritual began early on the sixteenth day of the sixth Tibetan month" (128). *Klu rol* ritual activity does not follow a Tibetan calendar (see note above).

(3) Inaccuracy related to ritual detail: "We were told that the customs of sacrificing live animals was halted ...although we are uncertain as to when. Our guess is around the mid-1940s." (184) This is contradicted by the fact that a live goat was ritually sacrificed during *klu rol* in Bod skor Village in 2006.

There are other concerns. Epstein and Peng emphasize the gender and generational relationships evident in *klu rol*. However, such relations as patriarchy and respect for elders are enacted in everyday life and in other local rituals. The suggestions that young people feel that participation in *klu rol* "devalues their worth and identity in the larger sociopolitical arena of modern China" (136), and that being skewered is "primitive and therefore embarrassing" (135), is at odds with our findings, based on interviews with both males and females from Ha ra pA thur, Bod skor and Gnyan thog villages aged fifteen to twenty-seven. Our consultants confided that they take pride in *klu rol* participation as it enhances local identity. Young men, for example, often volunteer to be skewered in an act of personal courage as it pleases deities, family members, and friends.

Epstein and Peng suggest that local Tibetans do not understand their own ritual activity or are incapable of analyzing it, and frequently disregard local people's frank contradictions to the posited theses: "While people told us quite plainly that the lurol guarantees fertility, such explanations did not reach much beyond saying that if the gods are pleased with what they receive in offerings,

[39] *Klu rol* resumed throughout Reb gong in 1981, but some villages may have resumed *klu rol* in 1982.

obedience, and entertainment they will confer good things in return. On the other hand, we think that certain ritual actions can be read to lend us insights into the mechanisms involved in this exchange" (133). "In discussion with our colleagues later on they ...to our surprise, denied that these rituals had anything to do with sex but instead constituted an unfathomable religious 'mystery'" (134). The frequent discussion of menstruation, pregnancy, and especially fertility, yields such statements as "Girls' blood does not count; they are infertile because they are unmarried" (134) (fertility bears no relationship to marriage; local unmarried women do become pregnant); "...married women are not allowed to participate in the labdze ritual or the dances because they menstruate" (134) (marriage and menstruation have no relationship); "...from the cold, 'premenstrual,' sterile maiden state to the state of hot, fertile womanhood" (134) (it is not uncommon for very young girls, e.g., six years old, to dance in *klu rol*). And perhaps most surprising: "Even after we told them that such goings-on were common in agricultural societies, which after all have a perfectly comprehensible mundane concern with fertility, and that in Europe and other places such periods of ritual license, during which people practiced ritual intercourse freely in the fields, were not uncommon, they still would have none of it. Their concern was with the primitive unseemliness of it all, which might besmirch the ethnic image of Tibetans" (134). It is unclear how concerns with fertility among agrarian European societies and subsequent practices might relate to *klu rol* or elicit a confession of the assumed sexual nature of this very local ritual activity. Furthermore, if preoccupation with fertility were universally "perfectly comprehensible" and "mundane," why would it enter ritual or warrant interpretation?

In terms of *lha pa*, Epstein and Peng refer to *lha pa* attire as "various shamanic accoutrements," (126) without indicating what these accoutrements might be or suggesting

what was shamanic about them.[40] The author's inquiry into why Sa dkyil Village did not have a *lha pa* in 1991 is resolved with, "It may be simply that no one has recently become possessed by the deity" (126). In fact, the processes by which *lha pa* were chosen may be complex and varied, depending upon place, time, and the concerned individuals. The authors claim that *lha pa* in Smad pa dress as "yak bulls" and "imitate the actions of coitus on women" (133). This, to our knowledge, never occurred.[41] They also claim that in Gling rgya "…the shaman imitates the motions of coitus using oversized genitalia made of wood and other materials" (133). This unclear and inaccurate description of what actually occurs in Gling rgya[42] exemplifies the paper's confused hyperbole and assumptions.

Epstein and Peng translate *lha pa* as 'shaman.' Bellezza writes: "The term shaman is also used as a general term for highly disparate practices the world over, predicated on a disassociation of cultural context and the reduction of diverse linguistic, symbolic and historical systems into a single objectified phenomenon" (2005:21). To differentiate this very local tradition from the Tungus term (Laufer,

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[40] For an extensive description of the accoutrements of Tibetan mediums and their relationship to the larger tradition of mediumship, including shamanism, see Bellezza, 2005.

[41] A male Ha ra pA thur villager who was not the *lha pa* wore a *thang ga* on his forehead to signify that he was Dpung nge ri lang before *klu rol* stopped in 1958. At this time, local people called him *glang tis* 'uncastrated bull.' He jumped toward women who wanted to have a child. While the man physically touched the women, no explicit sexual suggestion was made. In 2008 in Sdong skam Village, women who wanted a child could request that a man, who was not a *lha pa* and was dressed in ordinary *klu rol* attire, jump toward them.

[42] For an accurate description of this performance see Dpal ldan bkra shis and Stuart, 1998.

1917) we employ the Tibetan.[43] While much variety is evident among Tibetan mediums, including possessing deities, medium roles and activity, qualities of possession, ritual implements and attire, and so on, two consistent factors are a trance state of possession, and the role of mediumship between deities and the community. Therefore, when *lha pa* needs translation, we use the term employed by Stuart, Banmadorji and Huangchojia (1995) and Dpal ldan bkra shis and Stuart (1998), 'trance medium.'

In *Spirit-Mediums, Sacred Mountains and Related Bon Textual Traditions: Calling Down the Gods* (Bellezza, 2005), the author focuses on the *lha pa* of 'Upper Tibet.'[44] After interviewing fifteen *lha pa* and with extensive command of both the general literature on Inner Asian mediums and historical Bon textual traditions related to *lha pa*, the author offers an exhaustive picture of this tradition, and argues convincingly that the tradition predates the introduction of Buddhism into Tibet. While these Upper Tibetan mediums have been described in the literature, no description is this comprehensive, including cross-cultural comparison, detailed description of possessing deities and other involved deities, ritual implements and performance. While otherwise excellent, the handling of Reb gong is inaccurate. The author writes: "The senior *lha-pa* of Rab-skong is possessed by a martial spirit named dGra 'dul dbang-phyug and the younger *lha-pa* by a spirit called Blon-po, both of which are in the circle of the mountain god A-myes rma-chen spom-ra" (*ibid*.:26). As Reb gong is a vast region with many villages and numerous *lha pa* it is difficult to know who the 'senior' and 'younger' *lha pa* of

[43] For further discussion of the application of the term 'shaman' to Tibetan mediums see Peter (1978:288), Berglie (1976:85-86) and Bellezza (2005:2).

[44] "This Upper Tibet territory comprises the overlapping areas known as sTod and Byang-thang. These areas now constitute the prefecture of mNga' ris, and parts of the Nag-chu, Lhasa and gZhis-ka-rtse prefectures of the Tibet Autonomous Region" (Bellezza, 2005:1).

Reb gong might be, but as the author used Nagano (2000) as his only source we assume he refers to Sog ri Village *lha pa*. This error is minimal and does not compromise the overall integrity of the text.

Rock (1935), Peter (1978 and 1978a) Berglie (1976, 1982 and 1989), Schenk (1993), and Diemberger (2005) have all described Tibetan mediums. While Rock's description of *srung ma* is unique, and while Diemberger focuses exclusively on female mediums, these descriptions bear many similarities, including ritual implements and attire and activities conducted, primarily treating illness. While Reb gong *lha pa* have also treated illness and have acted as a mouthpiece between deities and local people while in trance, numerous differences, e.g., *klu rol* and *lab tse* ritual governance, cutting and stabbing, animal sacrifice, finding and destroying curses, rainmaking, and so on, suggest that Reb gong *lha pa* are unique. Because we are treating *lha pa* as a very specific, local cultural phenomenon, we do not review this literature, or other literature dealing with discussions of 'shamanism,' 'North Asian shamanism,' 'Central Asian shamanism,' or mediumship in other contexts.[45]

The current text provides the first comprehensive description of Reb gong *lha pa*. As we have focused on a particular area within a seven kilometer radius, we do not intend to represent all of Reb gong, A mdo or Eastern Tibetan mediums. As the first author is a native of the focus village, we have been able to offer intimate and precise detail, confident that we have presented the thoughts and feelings of local people without speculation or dehumanizing interpretation. While this text is the first of its kind, literature on Reb gong *lha pa*, other mediums of A mdo, Khams, the Tibet Autonomous Region and so on, is scarce and much research is needed before a complete picture of Tibetan mediumship can be claimed.

[45] Bellezza (2005) reviews this literature at length.

CHAPTER TWO

VILLAGE INTRODUCTION

Ha ra pA thur Village is approximately 163 kilometers southeast of Zi ling (Xining), the capital of Mtsho sngon Province, and approximately six kilometers north of Tho kyA Town. In 2008 there were ninety households and 524[46] residents, all of whom were A mdo speaking[47] Tibetans. Each villager born before 1981 had two *mu'u*[48] (*mu*) of irrigated land on which wheat, rape, flax and potatoes were cultivated. Most households had a milk cow and certain households had a mule or donkey for farm work. All

[46] In October 2007, there was a *gson dge* (see the section entitled *Gson dge*) in Ha ra pA thur. The involved family gave a piece of butter to each villager during the ritual. Before villagers divided the butter, they counted 524 people in the village, excluding monks in Spen dkar thang and Rong bo monasteries.

[47] A mdo, Khams and Dbus gtsang are the three major Tibetan dialects. In Mtsho sngon, A mdo is spoken in Mtsho nub Mongolian and Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Rma lho Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Mtsho lho Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Mgo log Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Mtsho byang Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, and in certain counties in other prefectures. Tibetan-speaking communities in Minhe Hui and Tu Autonomous County, Huzhu Tu Autonomous County, Ledu County, Datong Hui and Tu Autonomous County, Huangzhong County, Ping'an County and Zhong hwa Salar Autonomous County, all located in Mtsho shar Region, illustrate this. Khams speakers are found in Yul shul (Yushu) Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture in southwestern Mtsho sngon. Most Dbus gtsang speakers live in the Tibet Autonomous Region (Dpal ldan bkra shis and Stuart, 1998:32).

[48] One *mu'u* = 0.067 hectares.

families owned a tractor used for plowing and other farm work. Cash income was generated by selling sand and sandstone obtained near the Dgu chu 'Nine Rivers' (Longwu he)[49] but this subsided because of more lucrative pursuits such as collecting caterpillar fungus [50] in the summer and doing construction work from spring to winter.

The village name comes from the Mongolian *ha ra*, meaning 'black,' and *pA thur* meaning 'hero.' [51] Mkha' byams rgyal told us that Mongolians once controlled all of Reb gong and named the area Ha ra pA thur. Later, when the village was established this name was applied to the village itself. In 2007, Mkha' byams rgyal said that other local places also had Mongolian names, e.g., between the Thang ga and Ru 'og ma portions of the village, there was a

[49] There are nine valleys in Reb gong: Ka rong, Ya rong and Bde rong in upper Reb gong; Mtsho rong, BA rong and Bse rong in middle Reb gong and The'u rong, No'u rong and Dgu rong in lower Reb gong (Brag dgon pa Dkon mchog bstan pa rab rgyas, 1987:303). A small river flows through each valley. These nine streams converge to form one river, hence the name 'Nine Rivers.' The river flows into the Yellow River in Dgu rong, Gcan tsha (Jianzha) County, Mtsho sngon Province.

[50] *Cordyceps sinensis* are insect larvae infected with spores that germinate before cocoons form, collected throughout Mtsho sngon Province from the third to the fifth lunar months. One larvae sold for ten to fifty RMB in 2008 depending on size. Ha ra pA thur villager, G.yang mtsho skyid, collected caterpillar fungus in Mgo log, Mtsho sngon Province for two months in 2007. She sold what she collected for 30,000 RMB.

[51] We thank Dr. Juha Janhunen for the following two notes: "ha ra pA thur = Bonan (*)hara batur <*kara baatur 'black hero' (Written Mongol <qar e baqhadur> = Modern Mongol Khalkha <xar baatar>)."

small bridge. The area south of the bridge was called Chag ga mtho, which derives from Chag dbang tho lo'u.[52]

Villagers in and around Ha ra pA thur referred to the village as Ha ra du, which has been rendered Ha ra ba nghI ('Jigs med theg mchog, 1988:436)[53] and Ha ra pA thur[54] (Bla ma tshe ring, 2002:52). Sman pa Rdo rje[55] from the Thang ga portion of the village, and Mkha' byams from Ru 'og ma each wrote a village introduction[56] at the request of the village leader,[57] 'Jam dbyangs rdo rje, for submission to the Reb gong County Govenment in 2006. Sman pa Rdo rje

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[52] "chag dbang tho lo'u = Bonan (*)caghang toli 'white rabbit' <*cagaan toolai <*caga(x)an taulai (Written Mongol <caqhav taulai> = Modern Mongol Khalkha <tsagaan tuulai>, dialectally also: /cagaan toolai/). Since the actual name is 'chag dbang tho,' the element 'tho' might be, for instance, the possessive adjectival derivative suffix (*)-tu, in which case (*)cagaan-tu would mean 'the one with the white one.'"

[53] 'Jigs med theg mchog (1948-2001) was a monk from Rong bo Monastery who was addressed as Rdo rje while a layman. The eighth Shar tshang, generally considered the most important lama in Reb gong and abbot of Rong bo Monastery, was his student.

[54] Village elders preferred this spelling in 2008.

[55] He ran a small medical clinic in his home and was thus called Sman pa 'Doctor' Rdo rje.

[56] Neither of these village introductions were published.

[57] Reb gong villages had both a *dpon po* 'tribal leader,' and *sde dpon* 'village leader' in 2008. The latter was commonly referred to by the Chinese term *duizhang* 'brigade leader.' The tribal leadership was a patrilineal position only recognized within the village. The Ha ra pA thur Village leaders, one for Ru 'og ma, 'Brug thar rgyal and the other for Thang ga, Sgom pa were chosen by the village and were recognized and paid by the Tho kyA govenment. 'Jam dbyang rdo rje was appointed Communist Party village secretary by the Tho kyA govenment, and was the primary village leader.

spelled the name Ha ra ba ti, and Mkha' byams spelled the name Ha ra pA thur. Mkha' byams showed that the name had been spelled Ha ra a nghaI by Bse tshang blo bzang dpal ldan[58] in *Skyabs rje a rol chen mo'i rnam thar*.[59] The name has also been spelled Ha ra pa dur (Lce nag tshang hUM chen and Ye shes 'od zer sgrol ma, 2004:252).

The village was separated into two sections, Ru 'og ma to the north, consisting of thirty-two households, and Thang ga to the south, consisting of fifty-seven households. In cases such as building courtyard walls, roofs for new houses, roads and so on, each household sent one person to help. In cases of childbirth, *gson dge*,[60] wedding parties and funerals, at least one representative from each household visited the concerned family and presented *cong rdog* 'steamed bread'[61] or *go re sreg ma* 'baked bread.'[62]

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[58] He was born in The bu Village, Rong bo Town, Reb gong County and was recognized as the reincarnation of Bse tshang in Bla brang Monastery. He was the headmaster of Gtsos (Hezuo) Nationalities Normal School, Gtsos City, Kan su'u Province in 2008.

[59] 'Biography of Skyabs rje a rol tshang.' We were unable to locate this book.

[60] This may be translated as 'living charity.' Sometimes *dge chos* 'virtuous charity,' *chos* 'charity,' *dge* 'virtue' and *gson dge* 'living virtue' were used to refer to this ritual. Funerals were called *shi chos* 'death charity' in Smad pa. The section entitled *Gson dge* provides more detail.

[61] Bread made of flattened dough smeared with turmeric, rolled up, sliced into sections and steamed.

[62] Tree branches and straw were placed on an earthen platform, covered with clay and burned. Once sufficiently hot the clay was removed with a shovel, crushed with a *thal khem* 'ash shovel' and spread across the ground. Dough was then placed on the hot clay, covered with paper and hot earth and left until it finished baking.

HOUSING. In 2008, houses consisted of rooms that surrounded a square courtyard formed by earthen walls. They were mainly made of wood purchased from the timber market in Rong bo and from individual timber dealers. Bricks were purchased from one of several brick factories between Ha ra pA thur and Rong bo. Ceramic tiles were bought in Rong bo and used to cover walls and floors. Villagers hired Han carpenters from the area around Mchod rten dkar po (Baitasi) in Kan su'u Province to construct homes.[63] Most houses faced south.[64] All households had a small shrine room where statues and/ or images of ShAkya thub pa, Padma 'byung gnas, Gsang bdag phyag na rdo rje, 'Jam pa'i dbyangs, Sgrol ma, Tsong kha pa, and photos of lamas were exhibited. In the Ru 'og ma portion of Ha ra pA thur, homes commonly had images of Padma 'byung gnas in the shrine center, while images of Tsong kha pa were more common in household shrines in the Thang ga portion of the village. Each family had a dining room for winter and another for other seasons, a sitting room, two or three bedrooms, a granary, a *za khang* 'dining room,'[65] a stable and a toilet. Most households had an attached garden where fruit trees and vegetables grew.

[63] In 2008, these carpenters had built Ha ra pA thur villagers' houses for more than three generations. They worked in the village much of the year with the exception of harvest time and the New Year.

[64] Villagers believed that family gates facing east and south brought prosperity, while gates facing west and north brought enemies and conflict.

[65] With a flour box and chopping board, this room functioned more as a kitchen than a dining area.

CLOTHING. Only some villagers born before 1948 wore Tibetan robes in daily life. Robes were worn by all villagers on such special occasions as Rgya lo[66] wedding parties, *lab tse*,[67] *klu rol,* and so on. Robes included *slog pa* (sheep skin lining), *tsha ru* (lamb skin lining) and *su tshar*[68] (artificial lining). *Ras lwa* was an unlined cloth robe, *gos lwa* a silk robe and *phrug lwa* a robe made of woven woolen fabric. Jackets, jeans, suits and sweaters were daily garments for most villagers.

FOOD. Bread and noodles made from home-grown wheat flour were the staple foods. Potatoes, cabbage, prickly ash, green pepper, onion, garlic, chive, radish and carrots were also cultivated. Barley was purchased or exchanged for wheat to make *rtsam pa*.[69] Pork, mutton and beef were common meats. Cow-milk, cooked mutton and beef were served to guests on special occasions. In winter, families purchased mutton, beef and pork for consumption during Rgya lo.

EDUCATION. Certain male villagers born before 1948 were once monks in Rong bo and Spen dkar thang monasteries and were literate in Tibetan, while most female villagers born before 1978 were illiterate. In 2008, most villagers born after 1970 had completed primary school. All children at around the age of six years old were sent to

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[66] Local people referred to this holiday as Rgya lo 'Chinese Year,' and the twelfth lunar month as Bod lo, 'Tibetan Year.' See the section entitled Rgya lo below.

[67] For a description of *lab tse* origins and ritual in Reb gong see Stuart, Banmadorji and Huangchojia, 1995:231 and Dpal ldan bkra shis and Stuart, 1998:40-41.

[68] *Su* is a local term for *spu* 'fur.' *Tshar* is a short form of *tsha ru* 'lamb skin.'

[69] Roasted barley flour often mixed with butter, cheese, sugar and tea and then kneaded into dough and eaten.

Sdong skam Primary School[70] where they studied for six years[71] and then enrolled in Smad pa Middle School[72] where they completed junior middle school classes four years later.[73] Before 2001, students who passed the *'bring rim rgyugs*[74] (*zhongkao*) 'middle exam' entered Rma lho Nationalities Teacher's Training School (Huangnan Minzu Shifan Xuexiao) in Rong bo. Students who failed the examination generally joined the Reb gong County Nationalities Middle School (Tongren Xian Minzu Zhongxue) or the Rma lho Prefecture Nationalities Middle School (Huangnan Zhou Minzu Zhongxue). After Rma lho Nationalities Teacher's Training School became a senior middle school in 2002, students who passed the *'bring rim rgyugs*, joined Rma lho Nationalities Teacher's Training School, the Nationalities Middle School of Rma lho Prefecture or the Nationalities Middle School of Reb gong County. After students completed their senior middle school education in three years they took the *mtho rgyugs*[75] (*gaokao*) 'high exam.' Students from Ha ra pA thur have entered Mtsho sngon Nationalities University (Qinghai Minzu Daxue), Mtsho sngon Normal University (Qinghai Shifan Daxue), Northwest Nationalities University (Xibei Minzu Daxue) and Southwest Nationalities University (Xinan Minzu Daxue).

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[70] This primary school served Ha ra pA thur, Sdong skam (including 'Jam skor, and Rdzong nang villages) and Phyug skor villages. The school was situated in Ru 'og ma, but belonged to Sdong skam Dadui 'Sdong skam Big Brigade,' which included all the foregoing villages. In 2008, the school had seventeen teachers and 128 students.

[71] Including kindergarten.

[72] In 2008 there were about thirty teachers and 250 students. All subjects were taught in Tibetan except the Chinese language class.

[73] Grades six through nine.

[74] The national senior middle school entrance examination.

[75] The national university entrance examination.

VILLAGE CLANS

In 2008, villagers belonged to one of five clans: Ru gong ma Sangs rgyas tshang, [76] Rgya tshang tshang, Thang ga tshang, Ru 'og ma Khams po tshang[77] and Sha nye tshang (See Appendix Three). Only during weddings parties, funerals and *gson dge* were these divisions clearly evident. For example, at a wedding, members of both the bride and groom's clans had greater responsibility for serving food, tea, liquor and so on.

RU GONG MA SANGS RGYAS TSHANG. This clan had twenty-six households in 2008. The tribal leader's clan, Ru gong ma Sangs rgyas tshang, formerly resided in the southeast of Ha ra pA thur in Ru gong ma'i ra chag.[78] Later, there was conflict between this clan and the Zhong za Clan from Gling rgya and the Ru gong ma's drinking-water spring in Ye mtho Valley[79] dried up. Consequently Ru gong ma relocated to the Thang ga portion of the village.[80]

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[76] In 2008, Ha ra pA thur villagers referred to this clan as Ru gong ma, Sangs rgyas tshang or by the complete name, Ru gong ma Sangs rgyas tshang.

[77] Sometimes called Lha khams po tshang, Ru 'og ma and Khams po tshang.

[78] Ru gong ma referred to the Ru gong ma Sang rgyas tshang. Ra chag 'Broken Enclosure,' referred to a hilltop southeast of the village where broken walls remained.

[79] Ye mtho Valley was southeast of Ha ra pA thur beneath Ye mtho Mountain.

[80] We could not identify dates of this relocation.

In his history of Ha ra pA thur Sman pa Rdo rje writes:

> The villagers irrigated their fields with water from La mo sul Riverbed.[81] Once the water dried up because of drought. There was a monk named Bla rgan[82] Sangs rgyas from Ru gong ma Sangs rgyas tshang living in Spen dkar thang Monastery. Bla rgan Sangs rgyas loaded eight horses and mules and left for Lha sa. He visited the Dalai Lama[83] several times to ask advice on how to establish a new irrigation ditch from Gling rgya. Finally, the Dalai Lama told Bla rgan Sangs rgyas to return home and wait for a sign indicating how to make a new irrigation system. It snowed heavily one morning not long after he had returned home. There was a trace of a fox dragging its tail in the snow. Villagers dug the new irrigation ditches from Gling rgya following this trace. Because of this, a section of the village fields east of Thang ga was named Wa rjes 'Fox Trace.' Villagers irrigated Bla rgan Sang rgyas' *sgar zhing*[84] first in recognition of his contribution to the village.
>
> Because Bla rgan Sang rgyas also established an irrigation ditch for Sdong skam Village,[85] his family once received a sheep's leg and a bottle of liquor from Ha ra pA thur and Sdong skam villages during wedding parties and other activities. Also, his family's cows were allowed to graze freely on the ridges of fields in these two villages, even in the fifth lunar month, when livestock were forbidden to go near fields because grain is ripe and can be

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[81] La mo sul Gram pa was between Bod skor and Dkar rtse gdong. The river was named La mo sul chu 'La mo sul River.'

[82] *Bla rgan* refers to an aged monk.

[83] Sman pa Rdo rje suggested that Bla rgan Sangs rgyas may have visited the fifth Dalai Lama, Blo bzang rgya mtsho (1617-1682).

[84] 'Monastery fields.' *Sgar* was a local term for 'monastery.' All the fields belonging to monks and the monastic community were called *sgar zhing*.

[85] One kilometer north of Ha ra pA thur.

damaged.[86] Because he was a monk in Spen dkar thang Monastery, monks from that monastery were allowed to water their garden with Ha ra pA thur water.[87] This clan was named after Bla rgan Sangs rgyas (ND:1-4).

Each household in the Sangs rgyas tshang paid monks or villagers to chant Yum 'bum pa, '100,000 Yum' for Bla rgan Sangs rgyas for two days in 2007. Before 2007, Yum 'bum pa was chanted in the tenth lunar month, around the fifth day. Clan members did not chant on any specific date but instead chose a convenient time in 2007.

RGYA TSHANG TSHANG.[88] In 2008, there were thirteen households in this clan, sometimes called Rgya tshang mgar ba tshang 'Chinese Blacksmith Family.'

Both Smad pa Rdo rje's and Mkha' byams' descriptions are summarized as follows:

> This clan emigrated from a Khams area, according to an oration given by a *lha pa*. Earlier, this clan was situated west of the village *lab tse*, where there are now some Bod skor fields.[89]

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[86] In 2008, Bla rgan Sang rgyas' descendents did not receive these gifts and their animals were not granted these privileges.

[87] The amount of water was carefully regulated. A round stone with a small hole the diameter of a shovel handle in the center was placed in the irrigation ditch leading to the monastery garden. Monks could use water that passed through this hole to irrigate their garden.

[88] Rgya tshang translates as 'Chinese Family.' It's application to this all-Tibetan clan is puzzling but may be related to the clan having come from Tho kyA, a largely Han village.

[89] Sman pa Rdo rje offers no dates for these events and we were unable to gather dates from other sources.

Once this clan was tormented by the Sog rgya[90] in Tho kyA and Rka sar Villages. Because of this torment, they had to emigrate to their current location[91] and mixed with the Thang ga tshang. When the Rgya tshang tshang left Bod skor, they left a piece of land to a family[92] in Bod skor on which to cultivate barley. This was so *klu rol* players from Ha ra pA thur could eat *rtsam pa* in that home when they visited Bod skor on the twenty-fourth day of the sixth lunar month. Ha ra pA thur villagers called the piece of land Rtsam pa za sa'i zhing 'Rtsam pa Eating Field.'

Rnam rgyal gave the following account:

I have never eaten *rtsam pa* in the G.yang drung home, but the village received a bottle of liquor every year during *klu rol* until 1958, when *klu rol* stopped. Before 1958, the family burned *bsang*[93] and received villagers from Ha ra pA thur. The home housed the Ha ra pA thur *tog lha*[94] and we drank the liquor that they offered there. Around 1958, the head of the home, G.yang drung, went mad after his sister died that year. When we reached the home, G.yang drung had just returned from grazing his mule. He saw the villagers, became angry, tried to fight with a villager and refused to give us liquor. A Ha ra pA thur villager named Snying 'bum byams said he would take the man's mule. They quarreled. Then, we went to the threshing ground where *klu rol* was taking place. The Bod skor Village leader,

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[90] 'Mongolian Chinese,' a reference to people now called the Bao'an zu 'Bao'an Nationality.'

[91] The current location being the Thang ga portion of Ha ra pA thur.

[92] The G.yang drung family.

[93] *Bsang* was a ritual of burning juniper, wheat flour, and so on as offerings to deities. The substances burned were called *bsang rdzas* and *bsang*. The scripture chanted during *bsang* was called *bsang mchod* and *bsang dpe*. The *bsang* ritual was also called *bsang gtong ba*, *bsang phud pa* and *bsang mchod*.

[94] 'Top deity' refers to a pole featuring a flag and *thang ga* of a mountain deity near the top (see figure 26).

Pad ma rgyal,[95] came to the threshing ground, gave us silk and one *yuan*. He explained the family's situation and asked for our forgiveness. Afterwards, Ha ra pA thur has received nothing from the family.

The *lha pa* who once led Smad pa villagers to defeat the Sog rgya in Tho kyA was from this clan. After the Sog rgya escaped to Dahejia,[96] in southwestern Kan su'u Province, the *lha pa* was cursed. The Sog rgya communal pot and bowls were turned upside down to curse the *lha pa*. No male child was born in the Rgya tshang tshang around 1937. The only male members of this clan as old as me married into it, and some of them were adopted. This was considered by villagers to be a consequence of the Sog rgya's curse. After A lags G.yer gshong chung ba Rje ngag dbang blo bzang rgya mtsho[97] was invited to remove the curses, many male children were born in the clan.

THANG GA TSHANG. There were twelve households in this clan in 2008. The Thang ga tshang were the first owners of the current Thang ga portions of Ha ra pA thur, which explains why this portion of the village was named Thang ga.

RU 'OG MA KHAMS PO TSHANG. In 2008, Ru 'og ma elders believed that the Ru 'og ma Khams po tshang originated from Sa dkar gdong drug[98] in Khams. Khams pa gzhon nu dar rgyas and Byang go da la were considered Ru 'og ma villagers' ancestors.[99] Because villagers traced their ancestry to Khams, this portion of the village was

[95] Pad ma rgyal was the Bod skor tribal leader.

[96] See the section entitled Leadership in Battle for further description of this event.

[97] From Rong bo Monastery.

[98] Location unknown.

[99] We could not locate biographical information for these two men.

sometimes called Khams po tshang 'Khams Family'[100] by village residents. Seventeen households were divided into Sngun tsho tshang 'Front Clan' and fifteen households were part of Phyi tsho tshang 'Back Clan.' Mkha' byams rgyal said that many years ago, Front Clan was located in front of Back Clan. One family from Back Clan had farmland in the north of Ru 'og ma, called Ba chu[101] 'og, 'Under the Drainage Spout,' indicating that there was once a home there.[102]

Mkha' byams rgyal gave the following account:

> Khams people emigrated to near Bya khyung Mountain[103] and then separated into three groups. One group went to Mgar rtse,[104] one to Blon che[105] and the third to Ha ra pA thur. The three groups were all Rnying ma ba. Therefore, only these three villages in Reb gong venerate Gsang bdag drag pa kun 'dul as their tutelary deity.[106]

In 2007, *gsur mang*[107] occurred in Ru 'og ma on the eve of the lunar New Year. After Lha 'brug[108] shouted "*Gsur*

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[100] *Tshang* translates as 'family' but is also applied to clans.

[101] Colloquial spelling for *wa chu* or *wa mchu* 'drainage spout.'

[102] Most Ha ra pA thur houses had drainage spouts draining rainwater from their roofs in 2008.

[103] The tallest mountain in Reb gong, nineteen kilometers west of Rong bo, 4,767 meters tall (Huangnan zangzu zizhizhou difangzhi bianzuan weiyuanhui, 1999:118).

[104] Chu khog (Qukuhu) Township, south of Rong bo.

[105] Blon che (Lancai) Township, northwest of Rong bo.

[106] *Yi dam*, a personal protector of Buddhist practice and guide to enlightenment (Thob. nd.).

[107] *Gsur* was a burnt offering made of roasted *rtsam pa*. *Mang* means 'many.' This ritual offering was for the dead.

[108] Mkha' byams was chosen by Sha bo as his successor for summoning villagers to *gsur mang*. Mkha' byams was replaced by Lha 'brug in 2007.

mang la shog" 'Come to *gsur mang*!' all male villagers and children congregated at Srang mdo 'Rear Avenue'[109] on the village's western outskirts. Each family brought four pieces of *skya shog,*[110] a bundle of wood, a bottle of liquor, *bsang* (certain families also brought *tsha gsur*)[111] and firecrackers. When most participants had arrived, they burned *bsang* on a temporary *bsang* burner[112] while reciting the *bsang* scripture. Next, firecrackers were lit and *tsha gsur* was burned. Participants sat around the *tsha gsur* drinking liquor. Then one man collected three pieces of *skya shog* from each family's plate, and most of the bread was thrown on the fire. While burning the bread before 2007, Mkha' byams said, "A portion for Khams pa gzhon nu dar rgyas, a portion for Byang go da la, a portion for the land and water owners,[113] and a portion for all dead males and females."[114] Some pieces of *skya shog* were torn into pieces, and given to the participants, who ate them. Next Bstan skyong led participants to recite Che ba rin bo che'i gsol 'debs,[115] Bsngo ba 'Dedication' and other scriptures.

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[109] See Appendix Four.

[110] Bread made of flattened dough smeared with turmeric, cut into squares and fried.

[111] Offering made by burning only roasted barley flour. Water was sprinkled on the offering.

[112] Village children built two stone burners; one for *bsang* and one for *tsha gsur*.

[113] *Sa bdag* 'land owner' refers to the first owner of the land. *Chu bdag* 'water owner' also refers to the first owner of the land, in this case Ru 'og ma. While these terms usually refer to deities, in this case they are human owners.

[114] "Khams po gzhon nu dar rgyas *kyi skal*, Byang go da la *yi skal*, *sa bdag chu bdag gi skal*, *shi bo shi mo yi skal*"

[115] Prayer for G.yer gshong che ba rin po che.

SHA NYE[116] *TSHANG*. Sha nye tshang and the Thang ga clans may be related to Gu shrI han bstan 'dzin chos rgyal.[117] (Mkha' byams, ND:5)

Mkha' byams rgyal gave the following account:

> The people of Sha nye tshang once lived between Spen dkar thang Monastery and the Ru 'og ma portion of Ha ra pA thur. Ha ra pA thur villagers found a broken sword, a threshing stone and adobe bricks when they were leveling fields in 1965 or 1966 east of Ru 'og ma, where this clan once dwelled. There used to be eighty households in the clan, so they were named 'Sha nye Eighty Households.'[118] Then the households scattered and only a few families remained. Now there are two Sha nye tshang households living in Ru 'og ma and six households in Thang ga.

SHI NYE TSHANG AND BAN DE TSHANG. Snying bo rgyal gave the following account:

> When my father was young[119] and villagers irrigated the fields, each clan did so as a group and each clan took turns irrigating. At that time my father often heard villagers mention two other clans, Shi nye tshang and Ban de tshang. These two clans have now vanished. Few villagers now know about these two clans.

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[116] 'Relative.'

[117] Gushri Khan (1592-1654) (Thob. nd.). We thank Dr. Juha Janhunen for this information: "gu shrI han bstan 'dzin chos rgyal = Guushi Khan (the rest is apparently Tibetan) = Güüsi Khan (Written Mongol <gujusi qav> = Modern Mongol Khalkha <güüsh(i) xan>)."

[118] Sha nye dud kha brgyad cu.

[119] Snying bo rgyal's father, Mkha' byams rgyal, was born in 1938.

SPEN DKAR THANG MONASTERY. According to the sign hung in front of the old assembly hall,[120] Spen dkar thang Monastery was founded[121] by Chos rje don 'grub rin chen.[122]

> In the old temple there is a small statue that was sculpted in 1914 depicting Tsong kha pa at fifty-nine years of age. The image is called Rje do kha ma. Byang rtse mkhan po Blo bzang 'phrin las brought the statue from Lha sa.[123] Elder monks divined a location to hide it before the Cultural Revolution. The divination suggested they give the statue to 'Jam stong dpon,[124] and he kept it for twenty years.
>
> Once when Rje tsong kha pa was in Bkra shis do kha ma,[125] there was a sculptor named PaN chen byams pa gling ba[126] who made seven statues of Rje tsong kha pa in a day. Then Rje tsong kha pa's hair was magically cut seven times

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[120] Ha ra pA thur villagers referred to the two temples as *'du khang gsar ba* 'new assembly hall' and *'du khang rnying ba* 'old assembly hall' in 2008.

[121] We were unable to determine the date the monastery was founded.

[122] One of Tsong kha pa's teachers. For more information see: (http://www.berzinarchives.com/web/en/archives/approaching_buddhism/teachers/lineage_masters/short_biography_lama_tsongkhapa.html, accessed 10, 2007).

[123] We were unable to determine the date the statue was brought to Smad pa.

[124] 'Jam Village was situated east of Ha ra pA thur. The leader of all Smad pa residents was born in this village. He was called *stong dpon*, '1,000 leader' or 'leader of over 1,000 households.' His full title was 'Jam stong dpon. His descendants, Rnam rgyal and Rdo bha of 'Jam, held this position in 2008.

[125] We were unable to locate this place.

[126] No biographical information was found about this man.

every day.[127] Every time he got a haircut, the hair was placed in one of the seven statues as g*zungs gzhug*,[128] of which this statue is one. One night, He[129] came to the monastery to set it on fire. After the temple[130] door caught fire, a strong wind blew from the temple, extinguishing the fire ('Jigs med theg mchog, 1988:514-515).

There were approximately thirty-eight monks in the monastery in 2008, most of whom were from surrounding villages. Monks were invited by villagers to homes for *gson dge* and funeral rituals and were compensated with cash, bread and *rtsam pa*.

MA NI.[131] The village *ma Ni* was a small hall at the center of the Ru 'og ma portion of Ha ra pA thur that had *thang ga* of Gu ru mtshan brgyad 'Eight Manifestations of Padma 'byung gnas'[132] Rje 'bangs nyer lnga 'Twenty-five Disciples

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[127] Tsong kha pa's hair grew at such an unusual rate that it was cut seven times a day.

[128] Items placed inside a statue by monks or lamas that empower it.

[129] Chinese: Hui, referring to the Muslim leader 'Bog chi'i a dpon tshang, who was under the control of MA chi (Chinese: Ma Qi, 1869-1931) in Zi ling. 'Bog chi'i a dpon tshang was called A dpon zha ra 'Blind Imam.' One of his generals was called A dpon hre do 'Pockmarked Imam.' In August 1920, for about seventy days, they plundered Reb gong with approximately 10,000 soldiers (Sha bo pad ma rgyal bo, 2007:179).

[130] The temple in which the Rje do kha ma statue was enshrined.

[131] A short form of the six syllables: *OM ma Ni pad me hUM*, and also refers to the *ma Ni* wheel housed in the *ma Ni*. The *ma Ni* was also referred to as *'du khang* 'assembly hall,' or *sngags khang* 'mantra hall.'

[132] They are Gu ru shAkya seng ge, Gu ru padma saMbha, Gu ru nyi ma 'od zer, Gu ru sengge sgra sgrog, Gu ru rdo rje gro lod, Gu ru mtsho skyes rdo rje, Gu ru

of Padma 'byung gnas,'[133] Sgrol ma nyer gcig[134] 'Twenty-one Manifestations of Sgrol ma,' Sgrol ma dkar mo 'White Sgrol ma,' Thugs rje chen po bcu gcig zhal 'Eleven-headed Great Compassionate One,' Gdugs dkar 'White Umbrella' and Gsang bdag phyag na rdo rje. During the Cultural Revolution they were faced toward the wall. Villagers wrote numbers on the back of the *thang ga*, calculating village grain production to satisfy the *mnyam las khang* 'work together house.'[135]

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padma rgyal po and Gu ru blo ldan mchog sred (Thob. nd.).

[133] They are: Rje mnga' bdag nyid, Glang dpal gyi seng ge, Pa gor bE ro tsa na, Rgyal mo g.yu sgra snying po, Gnubs nam mkha'i snying po, Gnyag dznya na ku ma ra, Ngan lam rgyal ba mchog dbyangs, Sna nam rdo rje bdud 'joms, Sba ye shes dbyangs, Sog po lha dpal gyi ye shes, Zhang sna nam ye shes sde, Mkhar chen dpal gyi dbang phyug, Lde(n) ma rtse mangs, Mchan bu ka ba dpal brtsegs, Shu bu dpal gyi seng ge, 'Dre rgyal ba blo gros, Lo khye'u chung ba, Dran pa nam mkha', 'O dran dpal gyi dbang phyug, Rma rin chen mchog, Gnubs sangs rgyas ye shes, Lha lung dpal gyi rdo rje dbang phyug, Lang gro dkon mchog 'byung gnas, La sum rgyal ba byang chub and Mkhar chen bza' mtsho rgyal (Thob. nd.).

[134] They are: Myur dpa' ma, Khro ba dkar ma, Gser mdog can ma, Gtsig tor rnam rgyal ma, HUM sgrogs ma, 'Jig rten gsum rgyal ma, Gzhan 'joms ma, Bdud dag 'joms ma, Dkon mchog gsum mchod ma, Bdud dbang sdud ma, Phongs pa kun sel ma, Me ltar 'bar ma, Khro gnyer can ma, Bkres 'byin ma, Zhi ba chen mo, Rims nad kun sel ma, Dngos grub kun stsol ma, Dug sel ma, Sdug bsngal kun sel ma, Rig pa hUM sgrol ma and 'Jig rten gsum g.yo ma (Wang Yinuan, 1992:173).

[135] Chinese: *shengchan dui* 'production brigade.'

> After A dpon zha ra destroyed the previous hall in 1909, such *sngags pa*[136] from Ru 'og ma as Lha mkhar, Rta mgrin, Ban de tshe ring, Rnam rgyal byams and Mkha' 'bum rgyal cut wood in G.yer gshong Forest[137] to rebuild the *ma Ni*. They threw wood into the No'u chu,[138] which then flowed downstream.[139] After construction was complete, Lha mkhar volunteered to paint the central *thang ga*, a *thang ga* of Padma 'byung gnas (Lce nag tshang hUM chen and Ye shes 'od zer sgrol ma, 2004:252).

There was another attached *ma Ni* next to the *dmag dpon*[140] in the Thang ga portion of Ha ra pA thur in 2008 that was rarely used. Such ceremonies as *gsum pa'i* Sgrol ma, 'third month Sgrol ma,'[141] *bzhi ba'i smyung gnas*,[142] Reb gong *sngags mang gi chos thog*,[143] and *seng gdong*[144] 'lion faced,' took place in the Rug 'og ma *ma Ni*.

Ru 'og ma families went to the *ma Ni,* and burned *bsang* every morning. Village elders often went to the

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[136] A *tantric* practitioner.

[137] G.yer gshong Monastery was in Blon che Township. G.yer gshong Forest was nearby.

[138] A Dgu chu tributary west of Ha ra pA thur.

[139] The river was used to transport the wood.

[140] See the *Dmag dpon* section.

[141] All monks from Ha ra pA thur, living in both Rong bo and Spen dkar thang monasteries, gathered in the *ma Ni* from the first to the fourth days of the third lunar month in 2008 and chanted Sgrol ma 1,000 times and MaNDal bzhi ba.

[142] See the section entitled 'Fourth Month Fast' for more detail.

[143] Any gathering of all Reb gong *sngags pa* was called Reb gong *sngags mang gi chos thog*.

[144] The name of the goddess and the scripture Seng gdong. Villagers also used this term to refer to the ritual. Until 2007, villagers held the ceremony in turn on an annual basis in their homes from the twenty-seventh to the twenty-ninth of the eleventh lunar month, during which adult male villagers read or recited Seng gdong.

temple to turn the *ma Ni* wheel, circumambulate the temple and chant scriptures. These activities were thought to increase one's merit for the next incarnation.

DMAG DPON. Villagers referred to the shrine by the colloquial term *dmag dpon* 'military general,' because the deities venerated were believed to have been a Chinese emperor's commanders. It was believed that the commanders had been banished by the emporer.[145] The village *dmag dpon* was located near the Thang ga portion of the village, west of the eastern threshing ground, next to the *ma Ni*, in a courtyard containing a large brick kitchen that was used during the 2007 *klu rol* to make tea for villagers. The *dmag dpon* was believed to have been built in 1892 or 1893. The previous *dmag dpon* was destroyed by A dpon zha ra.

Most statues in the *dmag dpon* were re-sculpted in 1992. There were three main statues. The central statue depicted Dpung nge ri lang. To Dpung nge ri lang's right was Ba rdzong ri lang and Dar rgya ri lang was to his left. There were two small statues on both sides of Dpung nge ri lang called Shan pa ra mgo and Shan pa rtsi thung,[146] the retinue of Dpung nge ri lang. Smaller statues of both Ba rdzong and Dar rgya stood next to the larger statues, called *rgyugs lha*, 'running deities' because the deities were mounted on leaping horses.

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[145] Sha bo rnam rgyal suggested that the name of the Chinese emperor was Gong ma 'Jam pa'i dbyang 'Emperor 'Jam pa'i dbyangs.' According to *Bod kyi lo rgyus yig tshags dang gzhung yig phyogs bsdus dwangs shel me long*, two emperors were called 'Jam pa'i dbyangs, Kangxi (1654-1722) and Guangxu (1871-1908) (Bkra shis dbang 'dus, 1989:126-320).

[146] *Shan pa* 'killer.' Rnam rgyal suggested that these deities were responsible for killing the enemies of sentient beings.

A small statue of A myes[147] Ye mtho wearing a sculpted yellow monk's robe was to Dpung nge ri lang's right. There were also *thang ga* of Dpung nge ri lang, Ba rdzong, Dar rgya, Gnyan chen and Khri ka'i Yul lha exhibited in the *dmag dpon*.

Thang ga villagers took turns of one month duration to care for the *dmag dpon* in 2008. The caretaker kept the keys of the *dmag dpon*, and ensured it was clean. One male member of the family who was on duty for the first lunar month was required to stay in the *dmag dpon* on the eve of Rgya lo.[148]

LOCAL DEITIES

GZHI BDAG. Because Dpung nge ri lang was venerated by Ha ra pA thur villagers as their *skyes lha* 'natal deity,' he was the most important deity for people born in the village. Villagers also worshipped A myes Ye mtho, Khri ka'i Yul lha, Rus lha,[149] A myes KyA ting,[150] A myes Gnyan chen and A myes Khu thog. Among them, Rus lha, A myes KyA ting, A myes Gnyan chen and A myes Khu thog dwelled in homes. Their respective images were enshrined in those homes.[151]

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[147] Colloquial honorific added before the names of elder men and male mountain deities.

[148] The reason for this is unclear. One villager suggested that deities could easily be stolen on this day.

[149] Villagers referred to this deity as Rus lha 'Lineage Deity,' a term applicable to other deities, e.g., Lha lung thar called KyA ting his *rus lha*.

[150] KyA ting, Rgya thang and Gya ting referred locally to the same deity.

[151] Gnyan chen was enshrined in Bya me rgyal's home and Khu thog in Sha bo rgya mtsho's home in Ru 'og ma. Rus lha was enshrined in Klu mo rgyal's home and KyA ting in Bdud lha byams' home in Thang ga.

Certain deities were especially important to village clans. For instance, A myes KyA ting was more important for the Thang ga tshang than to any other clan. Rgya tshang tshang residents were devoted to Ba rdzong and one household in this clan kept a statue of Ba rdzong in their family shrine. Sha nye tshang residents worshipped A myes Khu thog in a separate *dmag dpon* in Sha bo rgya mtsho's home. Gnyan chen was most important for the Ru 'og ma Khams po tshang, while Dpung nge ri lang was most venerated by Ru gong ma Sangs rgyas tshang residents. In addition, among clan members in Ru gong ma Sang rgyas tshang, some respected Gsa' lung,[152] while others more highly regarded Gnyan chen.

Rnam rgyal gave the following account:

> There were two men in Ru gong ma Sangs rgyas tshang, Dar rgyas and Ban de 'od zer. Once they left their homes to do business. They transported some flour on a boat across the Yellow River one day. While one of them was in the center of the river, his boat began to sink and he was in danger of being carried away by the river. He called the name of one of these two deities[153] asking the deity to rescue him. He tossed the flour into the air as an offering. The other man, while running along the riverbank called the name of the other deity. The boat finally hit a rock and stopped. As a result of Dar rgyas calling upon Gsa' lung, and Ban de 'od zer calling upon Gnyan chen, they were rescued from danger. After they returned home, they worshipped these two deities.

[152] This was a main mountain deity venerated by Sdong skam Village.

[153] Rnam rgyal was unsure of who was in the boat and who was on the riverbank.

Although mountain deities were often said to reside on mountains, deities respected in this village had no related mountains, except A myes Ye mtho.[154]

A MA SRUNG MA.[155] Each family made a piece of paper called *a ma srung ma* each year before Rgya lo, glued it to a forty centimeter long piece of wood and hung it on the wall in the *go ka*.[156] Certain families hung the paper on the wall of the *za khang*. When villagers cooked *rde'u rigs*[157] for Rgya lo, a small horse or goat[158] was made of dough, fried in rapeseed oil and placed as an offering in front of *a ma srung ma* by putting it in front of *a ma srung ma* with such other offerings as dumplings and bread. A butter lamp[159] was lit in front of *a ma srung ma* each night during Rgya lo in 2008.

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[154] There was a mountain in Zhong hwa County called Dar rgya Mountain but we are uncertain if Dar rgya was thought to reside there. Such mountains as A myes Rma chen and A myes Bya khyung were both mountain and deity names.

[155] 'Protecting Mother.' Size and pattern varied according to clan or family preference. One example of *a ma srung ma* was white rectangular paper, approximately twenty centimeters wide by thirty centimeters long, made of cotton, in which patterns representing *nor bu* 'treasure' were cut.

[156] This colloquial term was for the main room with an attached adobe stove. It was sometimes called *mi khang* 'people's room' and was where family members dined and congregated in winter.

[157] Rectangular-shaped bread fried in rapeseed oil.

[158] These animals represented the steeds of *a ma srung ma*.

[159] *Mchod me* was butter, artificial butter or rapeseed oil placed in a brass or earthen container around a cotton wick.

THAB LHA. Villagers believed that the stove was inhabited by a *thab lha* 'stove deity.'[160] Some families hung *a ma srung ma* paper above the stove in the *go ka*. If the deity became enraged, for example, by a family burning such unclean things as plastic, bone, meat, rubbish and human excrement, family members might be attacked by toothache and bodily pain, and *thab bsang* 'stove *bsang*' was burned in the stove to remove the contamination. It was taboo to touch the stove until morning, after water was sprinkled on the *bsang*, which was burned at night before people went to bed because the taboo against touching the stove would not be broken while sleeping. In 2007, on Rgya lo eve, most families burned *thab bsang* before retiring at night.

OTHER DEITIES. Such deities as *sgo lha* 'gate deity', *me lha* 'fire deity' and *lus lha* 'body deity' were also respected in 2008.

Ru 'og ma villagers venerated Ma gza' rdo gsum[161] as their *chos skyong* 'Dharma protector,' A ma Sngags srung ma[162] as their *srung ma* 'protective goddess' and Gsang bdag dregs pa kun 'dul[163] as their *yi dam*. Dam can[164] was considered more important for Phyi tsho tshang, while Sngun tsho tshang and Thang ga villagers worshipped Dpal ldan lha mo as their protector deity.

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[160] Also, "god of the hearth" (Bellezza, 2005:6).

[161] *Ma* refers to Ma cig dpal ldan lha mo. *Gza'* refers to Gza' mchog ra hu la and *rdo* refers to Dam can rdo rje legs pa 'Protector Deity Rdo rje legs pa.'

[162] A one horned, one breasted female Dharma protector with one eye in her forehead that opens while the other two are closed ('Jigs med chos kyi rdo rje, 2001:1,050). See figure 20.

[163] See figure 20.

[164] A short form of Dam can rdo rje legs pa. Also called Dam can mgar ba nag po.

RITUAL ACTIVITIES

Thang ga villagers were Dge lugs pa devotees and were called Gsar ma ba[165] 'New Followers.' All Ru 'og ma residents were Rnying ma ba Buddhists and belonged to *sngags pa gsar ba* in Reb gong *sngags mang*.[166] In 2008, Khyi phrug skyid (b.1933) and Mkha' byams rgyal wore a queue wrapped clockwise around their heads, with red cloth braided into the hair. They participated (also with 'Phags pa rgyal) in *chos thog*, 'religious assemblies' held by Reb gong *sngags mang* such as 'spring chanting session,'[167]

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[165] Dge lugs pa followers.

[166] Rnying ma ba practitioners in Reb gong may be divided into *sngags pa gsar ba* 'new *sngags pa*' and *sngags pa rnying ba*, 'old *sngags pa*.' In 2008, most Rnying ma ba villages east of the Dgu chu were *sngags pa rnying ba*, while most Rnying ma ba villages west of the Dgu chu were *sngags pa gsar ba*. Khyung dgon Monastery, Spyang lung Village, Chu khog Township was the center for *sngags pa rnying ba*, while Dgon la kha Monastery, Nya lung Township was the center for *sngags pa gsar ba*. These two groups held their religious ceremonies separately, except for *zhi khro chen mo*.

[167] *Dpyid chos* was held by *sngags pa rnying ba* from Gling rgya, Nags rgya, Ri rtsa, Lha khang, 'Jam, Ha ra pA thur, Byang chub, Stag yan, Bya dkar lung, Nyang and Dar grong villages, Tho kyA; Phye dri, Sa skor, Ha lung, Ngo mo, Sdong nge, Sman 'tshong, Gyang ri, Rgyal bo sgang and Chu ca villages, Rgyal bo Township and Spyang lung and Lcang skya villages, Chu khog Township. The *sngags pa* from these villages gathered in Khyung dgon Monastery in Spyang lung from the eighth to the thirteenth of the first lunar month for this ceremony, also called *khyung dgon ma Ni*.

'summer chanting session,'[168] 'autumn chanting session,'[169] 'winter chanting session,'[170] *zhing sgrub*[171] and *zhi khro chen mo*.[172] Khyi phrug skyid and Mkha' byams rgyal had held the position of *dge skos* 'disciplinarian.'[173]

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[168] *Dbyar chos* was held by *sngags pa rnying ba* from Gling rgya, Nags rgya, Ri rtsa, Lha khang, 'Jam, Ha ra pA thur, Byang chub, Stag yan, Nyang, Bya dkar lung and Dar grong villages, Tho kyA. The *sngags pa* gathered in a *sngags khang* in one of the villages from the fifth to the eighth of the fifth lunar month. Villages took turns holding this ceremony annually.

[169] *Ston chos* was held by *sngags pa rnying ba* from the foregoing villages listed under *dpyid chos*. The *sngags pa* gathered annually in the Chu ca Village *sngags khang*, Rgyal bo Township, during the twenty-first to the twenty-fourth days of the ninth lunar month.

[170] *Dgun chos* was held by the *sngags pa rnying ba* from the foregoing villages listed under *dbyar chos*. *Sngags pa* gathered in a village *sngags khang* during the third to the seventh days of the tenth lunar month. Villages annually held the ceremony in turn.

[171] This is a short form of *'od dpag med kyi zhing sgrub*, an annual ceremony held by all Smad pa *sngags pa* who congregated in a *sngags khang* during the twenty-fourth to the twenty-sixth days of the fifth lunar month. Rnying ma ba villages in Smad pa held the ceremony in turn.

[172] 'Great peaceful wrathful one' was the only ceremony held by both *sngags pa gsar ba* and *sngags rnying ba* in Reb gong. All Reb gong *sngags pa* gathered annually during the twentieth to the twenty-third days of the fifth lunar month.

[173] The ceremony monitor selected by elder *sngags pa rnying ba*, was responsible for managing the ceremony, providing food and donating cash to each *sngags pa*. The eldest *sngags pa* was always selected as *dge skos*.

Villagers held *gdugs dkar khri 'don*[174] and *seng gdong* together in 2007, but Thang ga villagers did not participate in *gsang bdag*[175] and *bka' brgyad*.[176] Male villagers in Ru 'og ma conducted *tshes bcu*, 'tenth day'[177] on the tenth day of each lunar month in 2008.

All families offered water in *theb tse*[178] on the altars of family shrines and prostrated three times in front of the shrine every morning before breakfast in 2008. Some families offered tea[179] in another bowl. All families burned *nangs bsang*[180] 'morning *bsang*' in the *bsang* burners in their homes while *tsha gsur* was burned on the courtyard

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[174] Villagers took turns holding this ceremony in their homes annually from the twenty-third to the twenty-ninth of the tenth lunar month. They read or recited Gdugs dkar mchog grub ma bzhugs so during this ceremony.

[175] A short form of Gsang bdag phyag na rdo rje. Villagers took turns holding this ceremony in their homes annually from the thirteenth to the seventeenth days of the eleventh lunar month. They chanted Gsang bdag.

[176] 'The eight pronouncements of Padma 'byung gnas.' All Ru 'og ma villagers gathered annually in a home in Ru 'og ma from the eighteenth to the twenty-second days of the first lunar month during which the Bka' brgyad scripture was chanted.

[177] Ru 'og ma *sngags pa* gathered in a different home on the tenth day of each lunar month to chant scripture.

[178] Most families had at least seven *theb tse* (brass bowls) but the number varied depending on a family's personal preference. More *theb tse* were often added in multiples of seven, with the exception of higher numbers such as one hundred and 1,000.

[179] Villagers offered the tea they had for breakfast. Milk tea was offered when milk was available. When there was no milk, butter tea was offered.

[180] *Bsang* burned in the morning. Some families burned *gung bsang* 'noon *bsang*' and *dgung bsang* 'evening *bsang*.'

floor. Villagers also went to the *dmag dpon* or *ma Ni* every morning to burn *bsang* and the *bsang* scripture was recited by male villagers.[181] Villagers believed burning *tsha gsur* in the morning and lighting butter lamps in the evening benefitted the dead.

Female villagers often prostrated[182] in front of their home shrines and went to Spen dkar thang Monastery to prostrate or circumambulate the old assembly hall.[183] Women recited[184] Sgrol ma,[185] Sgrol dkar bstod pa, 'Praising White Sgrol ma,' or Bka' bsdus[186] in daily life. Adult male villagers preferred to chant Skyabs 'gro,[187] Ltung bshags,[188] Mdo[189] and Gdugs dkar.

RGYA LO. Village residents celebrated Rgya lo from the first to the fifteenth days of the first lunar month of the Chinese lunar calendar. There was a saying throughout Reb gong: 'Not wearing clothes except for *klu rol,* not eating

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[181] No female villager had memorized or recited this scripture in 2008.

[182] Villagers prostrated in divisions of 100,000. They began counting again from one after 100,000 prostrations were completed.

[183] Where Rje do kha ma was enshrined.

[184] Most illiterate female villagers were taught by literate relatives to chant scriptures.

[185] An abbreviation of Rje btsun 'phags ma sgrol ma la bstod pa bzhugs so 'Praising Rje btsun 'phags ma sgrol ma.'

[186] An abbreviation of O rgyan Padmas mdzad pa'i bka' bsdus 'Collection of the Doctrine Written by Padma 'byung gnas.'

[187] The full title is Skyabs 'gro bzhugs so 'Going for Refuge.'

[188] An abbreviation of Ltung bshags bzhugs so 'Confessions.' "Confession of Misdeeds, part of Phung po gsum gyi mdo" (Thob. nd.).

[189] A short form of Mdo bzhugs so 'Sutra.'

except for the first day of Rgya lo.'[190] Families spent a considerable portion of their annual income to purchase new clothes, food, firecrackers, candy, fruit and so on in 2008. Families visited and hosted each other. Children prostrated to elders before receiving gifts. Elders stated their ages and told the children they were offering longevity as they presented gifts.

At about five a.m. on the first day of the first lunar month in 2008, young male villagers carrying gifts[191] congregated in the village *dmag dpon* and placed the gifts on the altar. The *dmag dpon* keeper, Ban de, made a bonfire in the courtyard. Villagers sang and drank liquor.[192] At about five-thirty a.m. when most male villagers had arrived, Sha bo tshe ring offered gifts to the mountain deities venerated in the village. He placed a piece of bread in a bowl of liquor at the *dmag dpon* gate while chanting an improvised oration, asking the deities to grant a good harvest good fortune, longevity and so on, to villagers who offered gifts. Then he sprinkled the liquor once on the ground. For Ba rdzong ri lang, Sha bo tshe ring faced the Dkar rtse gdong *dmag dpon* when making the offering, for Gnyan chen he faced east and he faced west for Gsa' lung. Villagers entered the courtyard and faced the deity images

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[190] '*Drug pa'i klu rol min da gos mi gon,* Rgya lo *tshe gcig min da zas mi za*,' indicating that villagers wore their best clothing during *klu rol* and ate the best food on the first day of Rgya lo.

[191] Every family offered three pieces of *skya shog*, seven square loaves of *rde'u rigs*, three carrot and meat dumplings, apples, pears, a bottle of liquor and three *glud rta* (For more information on *glud rta* see the section entitled Selection and figure 23).

[192] The *lha pa* became possessed at this time in 2006, but villagers largely ignored him and he was quickly de-possessed. When the *lha pa* became possessed in 2007, he took all the villagers to the Snyings byams rgyal home and said that offerings should be made there. He was not similarly possessed in 2008.

when making offerings to Dpung nge ri lang. Sha bo tshe ring gave childless married men fruit from the altar and asked the deities to grant them a son in the coming year.

DEITY DEDICATION.[193] At approximately eight p.m. on the fourth day of the first lunar month in 2008, adult male villagers born after 1978 gathered in the *dmag dpon* courtyard for *lha bsngo*, sat around a fire,[194] drank liquor, sang love songs and danced to recorded music played on a CD player. At approximately eleven a.m. on the fifth day of the first lunar month in 2008, male villagers burned *bsang* in the shrine. Mkha' byams rgyal chanted alone in the *dmag dpon*. Villagers burned *bsang*, then attended a basketball competition on the Bod skor threshing ground in front of the shrine. Every village in Smad pa participated in this competition.

Unmarried villagers born after 1964[195] assembled in the *dmag dpon* and sang love songs on the evening of the fourth day of the first month, before 2004. The next day all villagers gathered in the *dmag dpon* for *lha bsngo* at around two p.m. First, male villagers burned *bsang*, then lit firecrackers and *snyan shal*[196] were offered. Male villagers were served liquor, cigarettes, sunflower seeds and candy by the *'khyig bdag* group. Villagers sang traditional folk songs. Village students who had passed *mtho rgyugs* and

[193] *Lha bsngo* describes the action of the *lha pa* reading scriptures for the deity, as was done by Rka sar *lha pa* before 2007.

[194] The *'khyig bdag* group was responsible for providing fuel.

[195] This an approximate date. Villagers over forty years old did not attend this gathering.

[196] Literally, 'ear lobe,' which refers to bolts of silk offered by villagers that were hung inside the *dmag dpon*.

'bring rim rgyugs were rewarded with a tea brick and *gos btags*[197] by the village leader.[198]

Young male villagers gathered at the western outskirts of Thang ga to welcome five *lha pa* from Rka sar on the fourth day of the first lunar month before 1997. The next day Rka sar *lha pa* recited scriptures[199] inside the *dmag dpon* while beating a drum and performing *lha rtsed*.[200] The Rka sar *lha pa* stopped visiting Ha ra pA thur for *lha bsngo* because of conflict between Ha ra pA thur and Rka sar over construction of a local silicon factory.[201] Villagers shot

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[197] 'Silk scarf,' used more often in Reb gong than *kha btags* to refer to ceremonial scarves.

[198] The basketball competition replaced most activities previously done on the fifth day of the first month in 2004.

[199] The scriptures were only learned and understood by Rka sar *lha pa* and lacked a specific name.

[200] 'Deity play,' was a dance performed by *lha pa*. This *lha rtsed* was performed only by Rka sar *lha pa* and differed from the *lha rtsed* performed by *lha pa* during *klu rol*. For a description of *lha rtsed* in Gling rgyal see Dpal ldan bkra shis and Stuart, 1998:44.

[201] The Reb gong County government wanted to establish a silicon factory on farmland east of Ha ra pA thur in 1997. Ha ra pA thur agreed to factory construction, but other villages in Smad pa objected over concern that the factory would pollute the villages and surrounding fields. Residents also objected to the factory being owned by Muslims. It was suspected that a factory would not be built, but a cemetery because Muslims owned little land in Reb gong and had trouble finding burial sites. The local government changed the factory location and built it west of the Dgu chu, despite Rka sar villager's opposition. Rka sar was west of the river and Rka sar villagers worried that the factory would pollute their land. They blamed Ha ra pA thur for the factory construction. The relationship between Ha ra

guns[202] in the air while firecrackers were lit on the fifth day of the first lunar month.

FOURTH MONTH FAST.[203] Villagers celebrated the birth, enlightenment and death of ShAkya thub pa on the fourteenth and fifteenth days of the fourth lunar month in 2007. Villagers gathered in the Ru 'og ma *ma Ni* and had lunch together on the fourteenth day of the fourth lunar month. Food was brought by villagers from their homes and tea was prepared by the *'khyig bdag* group. Most female villagers born after 1978 fasted until the following morning, beginning on the fifteenth day of the fourth lunar month. They were not allowed to eat, drink or speak during the fast. The *'khyig bdag* contributed tea and a fist-size piece of butter to all who fasted.

THE FIFTH DAY OF THE FIFTH MONTH.[204] Families made chive dumplings for breakfast on the fifth day of the fifth lunar month in 2007. Families put wildflowers[205] and willow branches on the courtyard gates and doors of their homes before breakfast. Villagers believed that this day was the best day to bathe in the river because Sangs rgyas sman lha 'Medicine Buddha' put medicine into it. However, no one actually bathed in the river in 2007. Adult female residents and the *'khyig bdag* group circumambulated the

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pA thur and Rka sar villages soured after 1997. The factory went bankrupt in 1998.

[202] Villagers who had access to guns, e.g., police officers, brought guns to the ritual. No guns were present in 2008.

[203] *Bzhi ba'i smyung gnas*.

[204] *Lnga ba'i tshes lnga*.

[205] Wild flowers included *re lcag*, *skyer ma* and *ra ma'i kha spu*.

fields after breakfast, carrying the Bka' 'gyur,[206] Bstan 'gyur[207] and Gser 'od[208] scriptures tied to their shoulders.

LAB TSE. *Lab tse* is both the name of an altar and the festival during which the altar is constructed and renewed. In 2008 the Ha ra pA thur *lab tse* was comprised of many wooden arrows ranging in length from one to twenty meters, placed in an approximately one meter square by one meter tall concrete box, with arrowheads pointing down. The Ha ra pA thur *lab tse* was located atop a hill southeast of the village named Dmag dpon mthon po sgang 'High General[209] Hill,' or Lab tse sgang 'Lab tse Hill.' The village had one main *lab tse* and thirteen small *lab tse*. The main *lab tse* was called *ho rang*,[210] and was considered to be the palace of Dpung nge ri lang. It was also called *skyes lha'i lab tse* 'natal deity's *lab tse*.' The thirteen small *lab tse* were called *ra ba* 'enclosures,' or *dgra lha bcu gsum* 'thirteen enemy deities.'[211] Ha ra pA thur villagers renewed

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[206] Tibetan translation of the Tripitaka (Thob. nd.).

[207] Collection of Indian commentaries on the Buddha's teachings, translated into Tibetan (Thob. nd.).

[208] The Sutra of Sacred Golden Light (Thob. nd.).

[209] A military general. This word was also used to describe the shrine.

[210] Colloquial term for *pho brang* 'palace.'

[211] *Dgra lha* 'enemy deities' or 'gods of warriors.' A variety of deities belonged to *dgra lha bcu gsum*. For further information on these deities see Nebesky-Wojkowitz, 1996:318-340. Mkha' byams rgyal named the following *dgra lha bcu gsum*: Tshe srog skyob pa'i dgra lha 'Deity of Protecting Life' in the center, Bstan pa rgyas pa'i dgra lha 'Deity of Flourishing Doctrine' in the east, Mi grangs spel ba'i dgra lha 'Deity of Increasing Population' in the south, Sdang dgra 'dul ba'i dgra lha 'Deity of Exterminating Enemies' in the west, Gnod byed 'dul ba'i dgra lha 'Deity of Exterminating Foes' in the north, Mi tshe bsring ba'i dgra lha 'Deity of

the *lab tse* twice in 2007, once on the eighth day of the first lunar month, and again on the ninth day of the fifth lunar month. The second *lab tse* festival was held on the eleventh day of the fourth lunar month before 1958. When the *lab tse* was rebuilt in 1991, A lags 'tsho 'du[212] changed the date of the second *lab tse* festival to the ninth day of the fifth lunar month and recognized Dpung nge ri lang as the master of the *lab tse*, resolving differing ideas about which deity inhabited the *lab tse*.

On the seventh day of the first lunar month in 2008, every household cut a branch from *thod dkar*[213] to make *thod dkar lab tse*;[214] one for each male family member. Male villagers took the *thod dkar lab tse* to Lab tse Hill on the eighth day of the first lunar month after breakfast. On the eighth day of the first lunar month in 2007, *sngags pa*

Prolonging Life' in the southwest, Dkor nor spel ba'i dgra lha 'Deity of Increasing Welfare' in the southeast, Mdzes brjid rngam pa'i dgra lha 'Deity of Beauty and Modesty' in the northwest, Dpa' rtsal bskyed pa'i dgra lha 'Deity of Improving Bravery and Agility' in the northeast, Dpal brjid btsun pa'i dgra lha 'Deity of Dexterity' above, Kun gyis bkur ba'i dgra lha 'Deity of Respect' underneath,' Snyan grags 'thob pa'i dgra lha 'Deity of Reputation' in the back and Bsam don 'grub pa'i dgra lha 'Deity of First Achievement' in the front.

[212] His full name was 'Jigs med chos dbang nyi ma. He was a lama born in Lha sde Village, Rong bo and lived in Sge'u steng and Spen dkar thang monasteries in Tho kyA. His lay name was Gnam byams rgyal. He was the seventh incarnation of Dar grong. He was also called A lags Dar grong, A lags 'Tsho 'du, Grub chen tshang, A lags 'Tsho 'du grub chen tshang and 'Tsho 'du Grub chen tshang by people who lived near Smad pa.

[213] We were unable to translate the name of this tree.

[214] Wool and small pieces of cloth were tied to the unsharpened end of the tree branch. This branch was called *lab tse* and *thod dkar lab tse* by Ha ra pA thur villagers.

chanted Dgra lha'i dpang bstod 'Lofty praise to the *dgra lha*,' to praise the deities and purify the *thod dkar lab tse* prior to the beginning of the ritual. The ritual began by burning *bsang* atop the hill next to the *lab tse*. The men circumambulated the *bsang* burner, carrying the *thod dkar lab tse*, reciting *bsang* scripture, throwing *rlung rta*[215] 'wind horses' in the air and lighting firecrackers. The men circumambulated the *ho rang* three times and then inserted the *thod dkar lab tse* into the *lab tse* while shouting, "Victorious are the deities!"[216] Villagers jumped over a half-meter high pile of stones after the *thod dkar lab tse* were inserted. This activity was called *dgra non pa* 'oppressing the enemy.' Afterward, villagers climbed down the hill and went to Lab tse nyag ga 'Lab tse Notch,' three kilometers southeast of Ha ra pA thur.

Before 1958, a horse race was held on the eighth day of the first month after the foregoing activities were completed. All villages in Smad pa participated. Until 1998, male villagers from 'Jam brought horses and rode them underneath Lab tse Notch in memory of the race. Also before 1958, monks in Spen dkar thang Monastery performed *'cham*[217] on the eighth day of the first month. People from villages near the monastery gathered there to prostrate to deity images in 2008. Adult male villagers congregated in the monastery courtyard and sang folk songs.

On the eighth day of the fifth month in 2007, Ha ra pA thur villagers went to Na gzhon nags 'Young Forest,'[218]

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[215] Square pieces of multi-colored paper featuring such images as a horse carrying *nor bu*, tigers, lions, dragons and *khyung*.

[216] "*Lha rgyal lo*"

[217] A masked dance performed by monks and *sngags pa*.

[218] Located west of Ha ra pA thur, west of the Dgu chu. Villagers usually met on High General Hill from 1991 to 2007, but three times they met in the forest, according to the weather. The forest was much cooler than the hill.

earthen stoves were made and tents were pitched in anticipation of a party on the following day. All the foregoing *lab tse* activities were repeated on High General Hill on the ninth day of the fifth lunar month. However, villagers did not carry *thod dkar lab tse* but carried homemade *mda' shing* 'arrow wood,' which were fashioned from bamboo poles purchased in the county town.[219] The pole was sharpened at one end, conifer branches and twigs were tied to the blunt end of the pole and *mda' sgro*[220] 'fletchings' and silk were tied to the pole.

Villagers who had the longest poles were rewarded by the village leader with silk that was tied to the poles on the ninth day of the fifth lunar month. The second longest pole was dedicated to Shar tshang, the third longest to G.yer gshong che ba rin po che[221] and so on. Six arrows were chosen and dedicated to lamas. It was believed that people awarded silk would have good fortune throughout the year.

Villagers retired to Young Forest after the ritual was completed and had a meal of *cai* or *huicai*.[222] Village leaders and the *'khyig bdag* group served liquor, beer, candy, sunflower seeds, beverages and so on.[223] Villagers sang, danced and competed in activities such as high jumping and tug-of-war.

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[219] Before 2001, villagers collected wood for poles in nearby forests, e.g., Gsa' mo nags in Gcan tsha. Prohibitions against cutting trees were more strictly enforced by local governments after 2001, consequently families began purchasing bamboo.

[220] Triangular wood planks tied in groups of three along the length of the pole. The planks were painted according to the family's preference with leopard spots and tiger stripe patterns.

[221] From G.yer gshong Monastery.

[222] The Chinese word *hui cai* was used locally to refer to a soup made of mutton, radish, onion and long noodles.

[223] Ten to fifteen RMB was collected a few days before the *lab tse* festival from each villager to purchase liquor, cigarettes and food.

Two types of *dgra non pa* were conducted after all poles were inserted on the ninth day of the fifth month in 1991. The first was jumping over stones, as on the eighth day of the first lunar month. The second type used a human-shaped straw figure, approximately one meter tall, which was thrown into a ravine and shot at with rifles and pistols.

KLU ROL. *Klu rol* took place in Ha ra pA thur on the eighteenth, nineteenth, twenty-first and twenty-second days of the sixth lunar month in 2007. It was held on the twenty-third day in Dkar rtse gdong Village and on the twenty-fourth day in Bod skor Village. Villagers offered *bsang* and *lha pa* led residents in performances[224] including *lha rtsed*, *sa bgod pa*, *bzlog shog* 'reverse paper,' *kha 'bugs rgyag pa* 'mouth skewer piercing,' *sa bon bsdu ba* 'seed collection,' *sa bon 'debs pa* 'seed sowing' and *slog rgyag pa* 'plowing.' *Klu rol* was a time of recreation for villagers, who observed and participated in the performances and also a time to gather with friends, neighbors and relatives.

GSON DGE. Three *gson dge* were held in the ninth and eleventh lunar months in 2007. 'Jam dbyangs rnam rgyal, Rnam rgyal and Sgrol ma mtsho, who were all born before 1948, offered the entire village two meals of *'bras thug*,[225] or *thug pa*[226] and milk tea with *go re dmar po*.[227] All monks from Spen dkar thang Monastery and all monks from Ha ra pA thur living in Rong bo Monastery were invited to

[224] We were unable to translate performaces named *tu'u* and *sho ra ra*.

[225] Thick rice porridge often mixed with butter or rapeseed oil, raisins and jujubes.

[226] Long noodles with beef or mutton and onion.

[227] This bread was slightly different than the bread prepared for Rgya lo with the same name. This bread was square while the Rgya lo bread was rectangular.

chant.[228] All village and nearby village families visited the party to present bread, a tea brick and cash. Close relatives offered wheat grain, and a larger sum of money. All the gifts were recorded by a family or clan member in a notebook.

A Bod skor villager reported in 2007 that one *gson dge* cost 10,000-40,000 RMB. However, Ha ra pA thur made a rule in 2006 to limit expenses, prohibiting families from cooking mutton soup for guests, to save on cost. Monks from Rong bo and Spen dkar thang monasteries stopped eating *tshogs sha*[229] 'gathering meat' after 2006, thus families who invited monks no longer needed to cook meat for them.

WEDDINGS. Family background was vital for finding spouses in 2008. Families with a history of leprosy or armpit odors were considered *rgyud pa mi gtsang* 'of unclean lineage.' Another criteria was if *the'u rang*[230] inhabited a household. Financial conditions and personal characteristics were also considered.

A man who wanted to marry visited a woman's home secretly at night and invited her to his home. The man's family invited matchmakers[231] on the following day and

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[228] Monks were often paid thirty to fifty RMB each or more depending on a family's financial condition in 2007.

[229] Meat offered at gatherings. In Smad pa, monks stopped publically eating meat in 2006.

[230] This spirit was believed to help increase a family's wealth because it stole things from neighbors. *The'u rang* often stole grain. Swords, knives and/ or sickles were placed inside grain in storehouses and on the threshing ground to resist this theft. In addition, it was believed that eating food from *the'u rang*-inhabited homes caused illness. See Nebesky-Wojkowitz, 1996: 282-283.

[231] Matchmakers were usually older members of the groom's clan.

sent them to the bride's home to ask the prospective bride's family to engage her. The matchmakers presented such gifts as silk, cloth, liquor and tea bricks to the woman's family, who invited male relatives and clan members to discuss the engagement. Opening a bottle of liquor was a symbol of agreement. Then the *rgyu*[232] 'property' and wedding party were discussed. The bride's family invited all adult male villagers to drink *slong chang*[233] 'engagement liquor' after agreement was reached.

A date was chosen for the wedding party.[234] Wedding parties were becoming less frequent because of cost concerns in Ha ra pA thur in 2008. Couples who had such jobs as teachers, government officials, police, doctors and so on were more likely to hold wedding parties in restaurants in Rong bo then at home. If a wedding party was held in Ha ra pA thur the *a zhang*[235] and *bag rogs* 'bride's assistant' escorted the bride to the groom's home on the morning of the wedding day. Female villagers and male relatives from the groom's family welcomed the *a zhang* outside the groom's home. The bride was required to prostrate in front of the family shrine three times when she arrived. The *a zhang* were served several meals in the homes of both the bride and groom's relatives. The *rgyu* was presented to the bride's father before the *a zhang*

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[232] Referring to the bride wealth. Yum skyid's family received 800 RMB when she married in 1996. The highest bride price in Ha ra pA thur in 2007 was 1,000 RMB. Prices were determined according to the groom's family's financial condition and the amount of robes and jewelry the bride owned.

[233] This liquor was presented by the groom's family to the bride's family for engagement.

[234] The most auspicious days were the third, fifth, eighth and thirteenth days of Rgya lo.

[235] This translates as 'maternal uncle,' but can also refer to the bride's entire escort, usually consisting of the bride's maternal uncle, male family members and elder male clan members.

returned to their homes. The *ma zhang*[236] received gifts such as mutton, clothes and cash. The other escorts were presented with cash, tea bricks or bread. The *a zhang* returned to their homes without the bride.

Another day was chosen for the groom's family to visit the bride's family. The groom was accompanied by the *mag rogs* 'groom's assistant,' the groom's father, brothers and other male relatives. Female villagers gathered in the courtyard and tried to pull the men's ears once the groom reached the bride's home. The women asked the groom and his attendants to give *rna cog gi sgor mo* 'ear money' to stop the ear-pulling. The amount was argued about before finally being handed over and then divided among the women.

In case of divorce, older male clan members from both families, along with the married couple, negotiated all decisions concerning divisions of property and children.

Widows and widowers were considered unclean. It was taboo for non-widowers to marry widows. People believed that wearing the clothing of widows or widowers could cause illness therefore, their clothes were not worn and children did not pass under the robes of widows or widowers.

FUNERALS. Cremation was the preferred method of corpse disposal in Ha ra pA thur in 2007. One cremation was performed that year. A date was carefully chosen by 'Phags pa rgyal[237] before the cremation. A *thab*[238] 'stove' was made

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[236] Only the maternal uncle or maternal grandfather.

[237] The date was chosen by a *sngags pa*. 'Phags pa rgyal was a *sngags pa* and relative of the deceased.

[238] The cremation stove was half-oval shaped, seventy centimeters in both width and depth with a half-meter tall rectangular base. The stove base had a five centimeter square opening through which fuel was inserted and a forty centimeter high by thirty centimeter wide opening into which iron rods were

adjacent to the home of the deceased prior to cremation.[239] The direction the stove faced was chosen based on the year in which the person died.[240] The corpse's legs were tied to the torso by wrapping a robe sash around the back of the thighs and nape of the neck, with the knees touching the chest. The hands were placed on the thighs. The right hand was placed on the left hand if the deceased was male and the left hand was placed on the right hand if the deceased was female.

The corpse was wrapped in white cloth at about ten p.m., carried to the stove by the son of the deceased and placed inside of it. All adult male villagers escorted the corpse. No women were present.[241] Adobe placed near the stove was used to cover the opening, then the fuel[242] was lit.[243] A tent was pitched near the stove where monks from

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placed. At the stove top was a round chimney, ten centimeters in diameter.

[239] The deceased's name is not mentioned here in respect for the taboo, common throughout Reb gong, and widespread among Tibetans, against saying the name of the dead.

[240] Zodiac animals were associated with cardinal directions; the pig and rat to the north, ox to the northeast, tiger and rabbit to the east, dragon to the southeast, snake and horse to the south, sheep to the southwest, monkey and rooster to the west and dog to the northwest. The oven opening faced south in 2007, the Year of the Pig, opposite the direction associated with the pig.

[241] It was taboo for female villagers to escort the corpse or attend cremations. Women stayed in the home of the deceased and chanted while the body was cremated.

[242] Wood, butter, rapeseed oil, *yam shing*, wheat, barley, rice, *so ba*, *dur nag*, *rtswa ku sha*, *zho sran*, *rtswa dur ba*, *tsan dan* 'sandalwood,' *thang chu* 'pine sap' and so on were burned.

[243] The fire was lit by a Han shoemaker from Tho kyA who was paid to do this. It was taboo for family and clan members to light the fire.

Spen dkar thang Monastery chanted. Adult male family members stayed near the stove all night. The stove was broken in the morning. The ashes were then removed and thrown into the Yellow River. Bits of bones were kept.[244]

The bereaved family prepared two meals of *skar hub*[245] 'burial noodles,' *go re dmar po* and milk tea for the entire village. All village families and other nearby village families presented bread, a tea brick, grain and cash to the bereaved family. The gifts presented were recorded. Female villagers born before 1977 were invited by the bereaved family to fast. Bereaved family members did not wash their faces, shave or cut their hair for forty-nine days. They did not wear new clothes, celebrate Rgya lo, nor participate in such social activities as wedding parties, *klu rol*, singing and dancing for one year. Adult female relatives of the deceased braided a string of white wool and wore it in their hair until *dus rin*,[246] the exact day of the following year. On *dus rin* the involved family cooked *thug pa* or *nyog*[247] for the village, signaling the end of mourning.

The corpses of two villagers were placed in the Yellow River after 1980: a man who died outside the village[248] and a woman who died of liver cancer.[249] The corpses were tied and wrapped in white cloth before being placed in the river.

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[244] Bones were often taken to Se ra dur khrod and near Bsam yas Monastery in Central Tibet. We do not know what this family did with the bones.

[245] These noodles were the same as *thug pa*, but were prepared the night of the cremation.

[246] We could not translate this colloquial term.

[247] Bean flour cake.

[248] It was taboo to return the corpse to the deceased person's home if death occurred outside the village. One man was crushed by a falling wall while doing construction work outside the village. Monks chanted in his home but his body was absent.

[249] Villagers believed that because the woman had cancer, her body was full of water and if they cremated her, the water would extinguish the fire.

CHAPTER THREE

LHA PA

The name most frequently used for both male and female mediums is *sku rten pa*.[250] Other appellations are *lus khog*,[251] in honorific language *sku khog*, and *lha pa*. The latter term is especially applied to those mediums who become possessed by some of the low-ranking *'jig rten pa'i srung ma*[252] (Nebesky-Wojkowitz, 1996:409).

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[250] *Sku rten pa* translates as 'body base man,' with the *sku rten pa's* body being the base for the deity. *Sku rten pa* were not possessed by mountain deities, but by such deities as Gnas chung. For further information see Nebesky-Wojkowitz, 1996:409. "…a category of oracles known variously as 'lhaka' (*lha-bka'*), 'lhabab' (*lha-'bab*), and 'lhaba' (*lha-pa*), or 'pawo' (*dpa'-bo*) and 'pamo' (*dpa'-mo*). These are the local oracles and are usually seen by the Tibetans as clearly distinct from the highly institutionalized oracles known as 'kurten' (*sku-rten*) despite the common features shared be these traditions" (Diemberger, 2005:117). A phonetically similar term, *hguriden*, was applied to Mongghul trance mediums in Huzhu Tu Autonomous County. For a description of *hguriden* see Schram, 2006:417-423.

[251] *Lus khog* translates as 'inside the body,' with the deity being inside the *lus khog's* body. *Sku* is an honorific for *lus*. See Diemberger, 2005:145.

[252] Two major categorizations of deities in Tibetan Buddhism are *'jig rten las 'das pa'i srung ma* 'protectors beyond the world' and *'jig rten pa'i srung ma* 'protectors in the world' (Nebesky-Wojkowitz, 1996:3-4).

The original appellation for *lha pa* is *pra rten*[253] (Bstan 'dzin tshe ring, 1998:54). A mdo speakers use *lha ba* rather than the written term *lha pa*.[254] *Thung ri* or *thung ri phra mo*[255] refers to the de-possessed trance medium. These terms were used when *lha pa* referred to themselves and to other *lha pa* in 2008. Ha ra pA thur villagers usually referred to *lha pa* by these names.[256] The action of burning *bsang*, reciting scripture, beating gongs[257] and drums and shouting the name of deities beseeching them to possess the *lha pa* was called *lha phab pa* 'deity descending.'

A possessed *lha pa* was believed to be the deity. During the 2007 *klu rol*, *lha pa* oversaw all performances, pierced player's cheeks with *kha 'bugs*[258] 'mouth skewers,' conducted *bzlog shog*,[259] performed *lha rtsed*,[260] honored

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[253] *Pra rten* translates as 'divination person.' In Rba bzhed (Sba bzhed) the term is spelled *spra* (*pra*) *bstan* (*sten*) (Sba gsal snang, 1987:29).

[254] It is common for A mdo speakers to say *ba* instead of *pa* e.g., *nus pa* 'ability' is pronounced *nus ba*, *grwa pa* 'monk' is pronounced *grwa ba* and so on. *Lha ba* means 'cartilage.' Used by Dpal ldan bkra shis and Stuart, 1998.

[255] This can also refer to young *lha pa*. Young *lha pa* were called *lha gsar* 'new *lha pa*' in Rong bo (Mkhar rtse rgyal, 2006:127).

[256] A local Chinese term for *lha pa* was *fashi*.

[257] *'Khar rnga*.

[258] A thirty centimeter long metal spike used in 2007 on the twenty-first day of the sixth lunar month during Ha ra pA thur *klu rol* to pierce *klu rol* player's facial cheeks.

[259] This was a half-meter long, white, rectangular paper printed with indecipherable Chinese characters that articulated a curse before 1958. Ha ra pA thur villagers printed from a piece of wood that was not engraved and the paper bore no actual curse in 2007 (see figure 27). This term also referred to the one and a half meter long wooden pole, with an approximately thirty

and punished villagers and reconciled conflicts. *Lha pa* were occasionally asked to cure disease in Bod skor and Dkar rtse gdong.

POSSESSION

> The *pra* tradition is called 'commanding descent into the [trance medium's] mind'[261] in the Bon tradition of *phywa gshen pa*.[262] The *pra rten* can be both sexes. There are three kinds of *pra*. The deity can descend into the *pra rten's* vision, hearing or mind. The first type of *pra* is mentioned in the book [entitled] Sba bzhed. The second is clear in the Tibetan medical book Sman gzhung yan lag brgyad pa[263] which discusses how *pra* descend into people's hearing to diagnose the causes of diseases. The *pra* that descends into people's vision is discussed in Bon tradition (Nam mkha'i nor bu, 1996:144).

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centimeter square wooden frame at one end on which the paper was pasted.

[260] In our area of focus, *lha rtsed* was performed in 2007 from the twenty-second to the twenty-fourth days of the sixth lunar month during *klu rol*. Three types of *lha rtsed* were believed to be associated with the three *gzhi bdag*.

[261] *Yi dbang lha'i bka' babs*.

[262] One of the Bon gyi theg pa rim dgu 'Nine Bon Vehicles:' The Four Causal Vehicles 1) *phywa gshen*, 2) *snang gshen*, 3) *'phrul gshen*, 4) *srid gshen*; The Four Fruition Vehicles 5) *dge bsnyen*, 6) *drang srong*, 7) *a dkar*, 8) *ye gshen* and The Special Great Vehicle 9) *yang rtse bla med* (Nam mkha'i nor bu, 1996:360). See also Bellezza, 2005:12, 50-51, 341 and 344-367.

[263] We could not locate this book.

The following three accounts describe the deities that possess *lha pa*.

Sha bo rnam rgyal:

> Emperor 'Jam pa'i dbyangs tried to make everyone in his empire financially equal but didn't succeed. He decided it was the people's karma not to succeed. He made his twelve subjects[264] and their twelve subjects all deities. Now deities have twelve subjects and the subjects have twelve subjects. It is the subjects who usually enter the *lha pa* but, depending on people's belief, sometimes the actual deity enters the *lha pa*.
>
> Dar rgya's subjects often possessed me but only at very important festivals did Dar rgya himself possess me. The quality of possession was different when I went to Ha ra pA thur because people strongly believed in the deity. Before going to Ha ra pA thur I often dreamt of the deity. I felt tired and my bones hurt after I was de-possessed in Ha ra pA thur, which meant that I was possessed by a more important deity. I could be possessed by Dpung nge ri lang, Dar rgya and Ba rdzong. The deity could change after I was possessed, but I was never possessed by two deities simultaneously.

Mkha' byams rgyal:

> The deity himself[265] must possess the *lha pa* if he is authentic. A *lha pa* cannot adequately answer questions from a lama if he is not possessed by the deity. The *lha pa's* face and neck grow bigger when the deity himself takes possession. The deities' subjects sometimes possess the *lha pa*. Villagers rate the quality of possession based on the *lha pa's* speech and actions, e.g., his face gets bigger and he is more agile. One *lha pa* told me that when he was invited to a home, the quality of possession depended on the family's

[264] When Sha bo rnam rgyal discussed the 'twelve subjects' he referred to the Ri lang group of deities.

[265] Not the deity's retinue.

belief and how much they had venerated the deity in the past.

People say that the deity himself is too large to possess the *lha pa*, but when the *lha pa* speaks I believe it is the deity speaking. The previous Ha ra pA thur *lha pa's* body would expand during possession and villagers had to open his shirt to prevent the clothing from bursting. I never saw a *lha pa* burst his shirt; I heard this from others.

Sha bo tshe ring:

A lags Rgyal ba took me to the seventh Reb gong Skyabs mgon, [266] who put me into trance. People said I was possessed by a main deity, who was very big and my body became swollen. My shirt almost burst. My nose and mouth bled.

The Gling rgya tribal leader and some old people took me to Reb gong Sku gzhogs tshang[267] who was staying at Reb gong Stupa. [268] I was possessed, burst my shirt and blood flowed from my mouth and nose, more than ever before. The lama gave me cloth to make a new shirt when I left. The tribal leader didn't agree to this but the lama forced us to take the cloth.

Snying bo rgyal describes Lha pa Lcags byams' possession:

In Ha ra pA thur the *lha pa* prostrates to the deity statue, *tog lha* or *thang ga*. Players and elder men start to recite the *bsang* scripture after he prostrates. The *lha pa* slowly shakes his legs first and then he shakes his head when players approach the end of the *bsang* scripture. Players complete their recitation then they shout, beat a gong, drums and shake *khro ril*. [269] Then the *lha pa* puts his hands on his waist, bows down and shakes his upper body. Finally, he

[266] Shar tshang or Shar skyabs mgon.

[267] Resided in Rong bo Monastery.

[268] Reb gong mchod rten was located in Smad pa, approximately six kilometers north of Ha ra pA thur.

[269] 'Small bells' were mounted on a frame and hung in the shrine. The bells were rung to alert the deity of when offerings were made.

jumps in the air several times, indicating that he has become completely possessed, then the shouting subsides, but the gong beating continues.

During possession, Lha pa Lcags byams often keeps his hands behind his back, imitating the gesture of the deities in the *dmag dpon*. His middle and ring finger are pressed to his palm with his thumb and his other two fingers are extended.[270] He lifts his feet higher than normal people when he walks. He pants heavily and his lips vibrate when he exhales. Sometimes he slobbers. His forehead sweats a great deal and his caretakers[271] often wipe his face.

The *lha pa* becomes de-possessed several times a day during *klu rol*. He often becomes de-possessed randomly, but sometimes he becomes de-possessed when enraged by certain *klu rol* players. He jumps in the air before he becomes de-possessed and then collapses on the ground. His caretakers help him stand and assist him inside the *dmag dpon* to rest.

Sha bo tshe ring A discusses Lha pa Sgal chag's[272] possession:

I saw *lha pa* perform for the first time during *klu rol* in Dkar rtse gdong in 1981 or 1982. It was Lha pa Sgal chag. He couldn't be possessed easily. I heard from other villagers that he could be possessed easily before *klu rol* stopped in 1958. He had become a widower so he was unclean, thus he needed to stay in the *dmag dpon* from the first day of the sixth lunar month until the night of the twenty-fourth, to do

[270] 'Gesture of Banishing,' also called the 'The Gesture Warding off Evil' (http://www.buddhas–online.com /mudras.html, accessed 8, 2007).

[271] The Ha ra pA thur *lha pa* had two caretakers in 2007—his younger brother, Sangs rgyas rdo rje and a relative, Dkon mchog skyabs, who accompanied him throughout *klu rol* performances.

[272] Sgal chag was the *lha pa's* nickname. His full name was Sha bo tshe ring.

such purification as washing his body with juniper water[273] three times a day and rinsing inside the body by drinking a small bowlful of the water once every morning. The *lha pa* was allowed to drink and smoke, but he was not allowed to go to places other than his home. He was not allowed to eat food from other families, and he couldn't eat garlic, chives and onion.[274] Caretakers cooked and washed for him and also needed to cleanse their bodies.

Sometimes Lha pa Sgal chag became possessed, and sometimes he was de-possessed. People said that it was because the purification was poorly done. The *lha pa* slowly went into trance when Dkar rtse gdong villagers chanted the *bsang* scripture of Ba rdzong. Then, he became de-possessed.

A relatively long time was required to possess him. Villagers chanted the *bsang* scripture many times but his body didn't even tremble. Then he shook his head to indicate that he could not be possessed that day and villagers stopped chanting and shouting. He sometimes became possessed spontaneously when it was time for him to perform *lha rtsed*, but he couldn't stay possessed. He still couldn't be possessed easily a year later. When he became possessed, he was not like other *lha pa*. He behaved gently and smiled when he performed *lha rtsed*. He died one or two years later.[275]

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[273] *Shug chu* was juniper branches boiled in water, which was used by *lha pa* for purification.

[274] Sha bo tshe ring A also said, "Once the current Dkar rtse gdong *lha pa* ate in a restaurant in Tho kyA after *klu rol*. Then, when he came to Ha ra pA thur, he was de-possessed continuously and couldn't be possessed." This suggested that the *lha pa* had eaten unclean food, which interfered with possession.

[275] Sha bo skyabs suggested that Lha pa Sha bo tshe ring died in 1980 or 1981 (see Appendix Four). It is possible that these dates offered by Sha bo tshe ring A are inaccurate because they do not match Sha bo skyabs' dates.

The following seven accounts describe experiences of possession and de-possession.[1]

Sha bo tshe ring:

> I chanted scripture whenever I began to be possessed. Sometimes the quality of possession was weak. I asked people to beat drums and gongs to increase the intensity of possession. I never remembered anything during the time of possession. I felt exhausted afterward. Two people needed to help me walk.
>
> When *lha pa* start to be possessed they close their eyes because they are afraid. I felt like my face was splashed with hot water. I felt black clouds were flowing through the sky.

Lha lung thar:

> When I was possessed I felt like I was being attacked by a power. I felt it in my *rtsa*.[2] I believe the deities possess the *lha pa's rtsa*. Most people think deities go into bodies through the *lha pa's* belly but I felt possession in my *rtsa*.

Sha bo rnam rgyal:

> It was very difficult to be possessed in the beginning when I was young. Sometimes I felt full of blackness, sometimes I felt full of whiteness. It became easier to be possessed as I grew older. I felt afraid – horrible – when I was young. I felt like it was difficult to eat lunch. I felt more comfortable later in my life. I felt nothing while possessed.

Lha 'bum rgyal:

You don't have any choice about being possessed. You cannot control that. My possession often started with a

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[1] For further accounts of possession and ideas of the possessing deities among Tibetan mediums, see Berglie, 1982 and 1989:363.

[2] See the *Rtsa mi tshang* section.

yawn and tears came from my eyes. I started shaking and felt cold.

Every year when it was close to *klu rol*, the skin of my hands and face changed from its normal dark red color to yellow, then white. We often performed after lunch during *klu rol*, so I had breakfast early in the morning. If I tried to eat lunch, my possession didn't let me eat. I vomited if I had even one bowl of food because of the discomfort in my stomach. Possession started from early in the day.

I washed my body with juniper water every morning after I got up and drank a bowl of the same water before breakfast. I was afraid that I would be humiliated by performing poorly if I didn't do the purification well. A myes Ba rdzong is not a normal deity. He is very famous around Reb gong. I thought it might ruin his fame if I were humiliated.

Sha bo tshe ring A:

I suffered from headaches and nausea during *klu rol* and Rgya lo at the times when the *lha pa* should be possessed. Sometimes I still have the same discomfort.

I don't remember anything about the transition from feeling normal to becoming possessed. I believe in the existence of *gzhi bdag*. It is true that there are deities. I don't know what kind of deities possessed me. I couldn't hear anything when I was possessed and afterwards, I couldn't remember anything.

I felt my body shaking when I became possessed. My stomach hurt after I was de-possessed. I couldn't move easily, felt tired and couldn't eat much. I couldn't control the shaking, but I was never frightened.

Sha bo tshe ring:

Once when I was a student in Zi ling, it was the time for *klu rol*. I needed to leave Zi ling. I became possessed where Mtsho sngon Nationalities University is now.[278] I was running and the people I was with couldn't catch me. I

[278] Mtsho sngon Nationalities University was located on Bayi Zhonglu, Zi ling in 2008.

crossed the Yellow River in Zhong hwa and became de-possessed. My feet were sore. I thought I should eat something so I sat down to rest, but then I became possessed again. I became de-possessed in my home in Gling rgya. My feet were covered with blisters. My mother saw me and cried because she could see I had had a difficult time coming home. I spent one day and one night to come home. The deity was calling me back.[279]

Snying bo rgyal describes the first time Snying lcags rgyal was possessed:

Snying lcags rgyal did not participate in *klu rol* in 1998 because of a death in the family. On the twenty-third day of the sixth lunar month he came to Ha ra pA thur to burn *bsang* without wearing a Tibetan robe. After he burned *bsang*, he beat the bell and prostrated three times in front of the deities. Then he put one or two RMB on the altar in the *dmag dpon*. After that he shook and jumped in the air, and was spontaneously possessed. At that time the Dkar rtse gdong *lha pa* was resting inside the *dmag dpon* after de-possession and said, "There is reason for his possession. There is a wooden block for printing *bzlog shog* and *khro ril* that was owned by a previous *lha pa* in his home." The Dkar rtse gdong *lha pa* became possessed spontaneously and communicated through gestures, repeating his previous explanation of Snying lcags rgyal's possession. Snying lcags rgyal continued jumping and shaking. Then the Dkar rtse gdong *lha pa* asked some of Snying lcags rgyal's relatives to take him home. They grabbed him and took him to a jeep while he was still possessed. He was shaking inside the jeep as it took him home.

Sha bo tshe ring A describes the first time he was possessed:

On the twenty-first day of the sixth lunar month in 1990, I shook in A ce[280] Klu mo rgyal's home.[281] I don't remember,

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[279] See Dpal ldan bkra shis and Stuart, 1998:39.

[280] A colloquial honorific for 'older sister' and is added before the names of older females.

but I was told by others that I was suddenly possessed, shaking and jumping in the air. I broke the drum that I had with me and performed *lha rtsed* for awhile. A yes[282] Snying mo rgyal[283] from Thang ga held my shoulders and then I became de-possessed. I was told later that A yes Snying mo rgyal caused this de-possession because she was a widow.[284] During *lha bsngo*, I went to the *dmag dpon* on the fifth day of the first lunar month in 1991. At that time four or five *lha pa* from Rka sar were becoming possessed in the *dmag dpon*. I felt that I was shaking while I was lighting firecrackers, then I suddenly became possessed. Dkon mchog rnam rgyal[285] grabbed me, and then I became de-possessed. Afterward A rgya[286] Sangs bha[287] gave me a *gos btags* and said "You are possessed at all the times,[288] I give you the village's *kha btags*."[289] Then I was taken home.

SELECTION

The *lha pa* was usually related to previous *lha pa* through partilineal kinship. Any adult male who had *lha rgyud*[290] '*lha pa* lineage' could be possessed by the mountain deity. Someone who was not a *lha pa* could be possessed during *klu rol* if they were the relatives of previous *lha pa*.

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[281] This was the home in which the *lha pa* should be possessed on the eighteenth, nineteenth and twenty-first days of the sixth lunar month during *klu rol*.

[282] A colloquial honorific for female elders.

[283] Sha bo tshe ring's mother.

[284] Referring to a widow's uncleanliness.

[285] Sha bo tshe ring's brother.

[286] A colloquial honorific for 'older brother' added before the names of older males.

[287] The village Communist Party Secretary until 2004.

[288] Possessed at all the times a *lha pa* should have been possessed in Ha ra pA thur.

[289] "*Nam yin na ra khyod 'babs gi 'dug gi, ngas khyo sde ba gi kha btags btang dang nas*."

[290] Blood relationship with a *lha pa*.

However, Lha lung thar said, "I am not personally related to any *lha pa* but there were two *lha pa* in my clan, Khon thar and Sha bo rgya mtsho. I am the third."

Sha bo tshe ring told us, "A *lha pa* should have *lha rgyud*. I don't. I was chosen by a lama."

The following six accounts describe *lha pa* selection.

Mkha' byams rgyal:

> All adult male villagers gathered in the *dmag dpon*, washed their bodies with juniper water, drank this water and stayed in the *dmag dpon* until the *lha pa* was chosen before 1958. *Bsang* was burned and the *bsang* scripture was chanted after purification. Several people then became possessed. Others could leave. The number was reduced until only one person remained. The *lha pa* governed this process in trance. The *lha pa* and all candidates sat together and tried to be possessed together. The old *lha pa* became possessed first. If the young candidate could not be possessed the old *lha pa* spat liquor on him, shook his body, hit his back, lit a *glud rta*[291] on fire, put it into a bowl and asked the young man to

[291] 'Ransom horse' (Chinese: *qianma* 'money horse'). Also called *ban ser po* (see figure 23). *Glud rta* were glued above the center of the door, to the door, and/ or on either side of the door of the *dmag dpon*. Certain Dkar rtse gdong families glued them above the center of their courtyard gates, windows and doors in their homes. The paper was yellow, rectangular, twenty-five centimeters long, ten centimeters wide and printed with green ink displaying a phoenix, dragon, a coin and two horses. Requests of the deity were printed in Chinese. Versions of *glud rta* varied in terms of the requests printed on the paper. Below is a translation of a typical *glud rta*:

Dragon-Phoenix Money Horse
Throne of the Deities of Heaven and Earth
Long live China.

drink it. He did this until the candidate became possessed. They did the purification again if he still could not be possessed. They burned juniper around him and checked to see if there was any amulet on his body.[292]

If five people became possessed the *lha pa* threw roasted barley[293] at them and some became de-possessed. Once the young *lha pa* attained an adequate quality of possession, the *lha pa* taught the candidate how to perform *lha rtsed*, holding his hand. The process of choosing the *lha pa* took at least seven, sometimes fifteen days.

Lha lung thar:

I first performed as *lha pa* in 1948. Ri rtsa and Lha khang villages invited a lama named G.yer gshong mkhan po[294] in 1940 to choose a new *lha pa*. The lama claimed that I would be the *lha pa* and gave a *kha btags* to my father, but the lama said the villagers would have to wait until the Year of the Rat [1948].[295] The lama said I couldn't be possessed

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[Grant] the country prosperity and [may] the people live in peace.
[Grant us] timely wind and rain.
[Grant us] a bumper harvest of five grains.
Eliminate catastrophy.
[May] floods and fires not harm anyone.
[May the] whole family be lucky and celebratory.
[Grant us] good fortune, long life, health and peace.
Remedy various illnesses.
Divine Buddha bless [us].
[Grant us] peaceful and tranquil territory.
Reincarnate the dead.

[292] An amulet could be given by a lama to resist possession.
[293] *Sher rtsi*.
[294] From Sha sbrang Monastery, Gnyan thog Township.
[295] Mkhar rtse rgyal, quoting Lha lung thar wrote,

> …Mkhan po tshang [A lags G.yer gshong mkhan po tshang] brought a *lha pa* with him as an assistant, elders put the *lha pa* into trance in front of the lama and requested [the *lha pa*] choose me

until that year. Villagers invited A lags Ban sngags tshang from Ko'u sde[296] in the Year of the Rat. The lama brought an old *lha pa* named Ban de rgyal from Ko'u sde with him. Three candidates were chosen by the old *lha pa*. One candidate had been possessed during *klu rol*. The boy was preferred by villagers because he had been possessed before. The lama and *lha pa* tried for three days to put this boy into trance, but failed. Three candidates gathered in the shrine on the third day. Only I was possessed.

Sha bo tshe ring A:

I was performing *gar* on the twenty-second day of the sixth lunar month during *klu rol* in 1994. The Dkar rtse gdong *lha pa* came from the *dmag dpon* toward me with silk in his hand, put the silk around my neck and threw the *shing rgyan*[297] in front of me. It showed a positive result and the players shouted "*Shing rgyan*!" Then I ran from the threshing ground. At that time I worked for the Water Conservation Station as a bulldozer driver, and I also

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as the new *lha pa*. The *lha pa* spoke indicating [I] couldn't be possessed until the Year of the Rat. (Mkhar rtse rgyal, 2006:2,127).

This differs from the account that we collected. Lha lung thar told us that the *lama* said his possession needed to wait until the Year of the Rat.

[296] There was an assembly hall in Ko'u sde Village, Chu khog Township where A lags Ban sngags tshang lived.

[297] The *shing rgyan* was a wood cylinder pointed at one end and cut in half lengthwise, used by *lha pa* to divine the mountain deities' satisfaction with *klu rol* performances and also used to make divinations (see figure 25). *Lha pa* often threw *shing rgyan* on the ground. If one half of the *shing rgyan* faced down while the other half faced up, the mountain deity was pleased. If both halves of the *shing rgyan* faced down or up, the mountain deity was displeased.

worked in the aluminum factory[298] some of the time. I went to the aluminum factory to continue my work as my mother and sister had asked. I heard from other people that the Dkar rtse gdong *lha pa*, in trance, had said that he had marked the new *lha pa*.[299] Then village elders decided that they would talk to my father and convince him that I must be possessed on the twenty-third day of the sixth lunar month.

My father didn't agree at first. One reason he didn't agree was that *sngags pa* shouldn't be *lha pa*.[300] Another reason was that I was the only boy in my family and nobody wants their only son to be *lha pa*. The Dkar rtse gdong *lha pa* brought three bottles of liquor; one bottle from each deity.[301] He wrapped the bottles in silk. One bottle fell from his hand but didn't break. He said it was a good sign that it didn't break. He gave them to my father. All the old male villagers and the Dkar rtse gdong *lha pa* pleaded with my father to let me be a *lha pa*. Villagers promised to respect me and pay my expenses.[302] Finally the *lha pa* said to my father, "When you went to (upper sunny) Lha sa, I came to you three times."[303] My father was surprised and agreed that

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[298] The Thung rin Aluminum Factory was located five kilometers south of Ha ra pA thur and three kilometers north of Tho kyA. It closed in 2005.

[299] By giving Sha bo tshe ring the silk and throwing the *shing rgyan*, the Dkar rtse gdong *lha pa* had 'marked' or designated him as the new Ha ra pA thur *lha pa*.

[300] Because mountain deities were commonly considered by Ha ra pA thur villagers to be *yi dwags* 'hungry ghosts' it was taboo for *sngags pa* and monks to prostrate to mountain deities and for them to become *lha pa*. Because Sha bo tshe ring's father was a *sngags pa* it was taboo for him to be *lha pa*. Mountain deities were also called *dri za* 'fragrance eaters' because they consume *bsang* smoke.

[301] The deities were Dpung nge ri lang, Ba rdzong ri lang and Dar rgya ri lang.

[302] Expenses accrued when visiting the lama, e.g., tea, *kha btags*, cash and so on.

[303] "*Khyod stod nyi ma lha sa song dus, ngas khyod skor gsum rgyab ba*." This refers to Mtsho rgyal ma's

I could become possessed. He sent my sister for me. When I got home most villagers were waiting for me. Such old men as A rgya Sangs bha and A rgya Rnam rgya were a little drunk and said "*A bhe*,[304] wash your face and hands. It is unavoidable. The *lha pa* has been in trance since you left,[305] and is waiting for you."

My father said, "It is unavoidable, we decided you will be possessed." I washed my face and hands, put on a *phrug*[306] and my father asked me to take the amulet[307] from around my neck. They burned 'contamination *bsang*'[308] in our home and then left for the *dmag dpon*.

On the way to the *dmag dpon* other male *klu rol* players from the three villages under the *lha pa's* instruction, stood in two lines on both sides of the road and welcomed me. All the players were warned by the *lha pa* to not say negative or insulting things when I came.

All the players escorted me to the *dmag dpon*. The Dkar rtse gdong *lha pa* sat on the altar in front of the deities after I arrived in the *dmag dpon*. He made me sit on the

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dream, described in the section entitled *Lha pa* and Change, where she was visited by Ba rdzong.

[304] A colloquial term indicating affection for a young boy, used only by old men especially the father of the boy.

[305] Referring to the Dkar rtse gdong *lha pa*.

[306] Colloquial term for *phrug lwa.*

[307] The purpose of the amulet was to prevent possession. Mkha' byams rgyal had taken Sha bo tshe ring A to A lags G.yer gshong tshang after Sha bo tshe ring A's first possession to obtain the amulet. This lama was the seventh incarnation of G.yer gshong che ba rin po che in G.yer gshong Monastery, Blon che Township. His full name was 'Jam dbyang dge 'dun rgya mtsho. Ha ra pA thur villagers referred to him as A lags Che ba rin po che or A lang G.yer gshong tshang.

[308] *Mnol bsang* or crushed juniper leaves and substances such as *tsan dan dkar po* 'white sandalwood,' *tsan dan dmar po* 'red sandalwood' and *a ka ra* 'aloe wood' that are burned to purify objects and people with the smoke. The ingredients varied according to the purpose of the purification.

dmag dpon doorsill and started to put me into trance by burning *bsang* and juniper. The *bsang* scripture was chanted. I was asked to take the clothes off my upper body. I was wearing a finger ring. A Dkar rtse gdong villager asked me to remove it. The Dkar rtse gdong *lha pa* took a knotted string from his neck, given to him by Bse rdo rje 'chang[309] and tied it around my neck. The *lha pa* blew on a handful of wheat grain, threw it on me and then spit a mouthful of liquor on me.

I felt different whenever the liquor and wheat touched me. I shook strongly. Sometimes the *lha pa* lifted me off the ground by my robe sash. Sometimes he grabbed my arms and shook me. Then I was possessed and I couldn't remember anything. But I was only possessed for a very short time. I jumped in the air. I felt like I was smoking *du nag*.[310] I felt like I was walking on cotton in the air. I was told by other people that I jumped very high. I found myself de-possessed at the *bsang* burner.

The Dkar rtse gdong *lha pa* accused villagers of not believing in me. Villagers wanted me to become possessed again. The *lha pa* said, "We don't need to put him into trance. I already marked him. He must be taken to Bod skor tomorrow morning. Tomorrow I will put him into trance again."

The *lha pa* commanded the *'khyig bdag* group to keep me inside the *dmag dpon* that night. They cooked for me that night. The leader of the Thang ga portion of the village was Lha lung thar at that time. He went to the county town to purchase mutton. About thirteen or fourteen of us including the *'khyig bdag* group, village leaders and some old villagers had mutton for supper and stayed in the *dmag dpon* all night. I washed in juniper water once. I drank a small bowlful of the same water the next morning.

We left for Bod skor at about eight o'clock with some companions from Ha ra pA thur. We had steamed dumplings for breakfast with the Dkar rtse gdong *lha pa* in

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[309] Bse tshang blo bzang dpal ldan, from Bla brang Monastery, who invested the Dkar rtse gdong *lha pa*. The string was given after the authenticity of the *lha pa* was confirmed by the lama.

[310] 'Black cigarette' was the colloquial term for opium.

Rin chen rgyal's home. Next, the *lha pa* led us to the *dmag dpon* to begin possession. The *lha pa* and I washed our hands with liquor.[311] *Bsang* was burned and the Ha ra pA thur and Dkar rtse gdong *bsang* scriptures were recited simultaneously. The Dkar rtse gdong *lha pa* became possessed. The *lha pa* commanded A rgya Sangs bha to wash my body again.

The *lha pa* kept A rgya Sangs bha and me alone in the *dmag dpon*. He would not let anyone else in the *dmag dpon*. I started feeling worried and afraid, because I had heard a story about a possessed *lha pa* cutting the head of a new *lha pa* who could not be possessed. I asked my father to come into the *dmag dpon* but the *lha pa* refused. The *lha pa* closed all the doors and windows of the *dmag dpon* and asked me to take off my clothes. First, I took the clothes off my upper body, but the *lha pa* demanded that I be completely naked. After I became naked the *lha pa* gave my robe back and asked A rgya Sangs bha to wash my body with a *kha btags* dipped in juniper water. A rgya Sangs bha poured water on my head and cleaned my body with the *kha btags*. The Dkar rtse gdong *lha pa* asked me to put my trousers on but he wouldn't allow me to wear underwear. He opened the windows and doors and asked villagers to recite the *bsang* scripture to initiate possession. Then A rgya Rnam rgyal said to me, "Don't pray to deities or images, instead pray in your heart to A lags Grub chen tshang."

I jumped in the air as soon as I visualized A lags Grub chen tshang in my mind. I was told that it was unbelievable how high I jumped. I jumped higher than a person's height. Later one old man told me that he was worried about my head hitting the ceiling. Then I became de-possessed. The Dkar rtse gdong *lha pa* was still in trance and tried to put me into trance again.

I was possessed for a while whenever he spit on me with liquor. Villagers chanted and sprinkled liquor, but I became de-possessed, then possessed, again and again. The Dkar rtse gdong *lha pa* suggested I be taken to A lags Grub chen tshang.

[311] For purification.

Lha 'bum rgyal:

> One night before the *lha pa* selection, I dreamed about A myes Ba rdzong. The following morning I went to the *dmag dpon* and sat at the stove in the *dmag dpon* kitchen with such villagers as Rab rgyas and Dpal no. I told them about my dream. One said jokingly that *a myes tshang*[312] didn't want people like us as *lha pa*. In the evening when I was about to go to bed, my body shook and I felt like I was freezing. That feeling lasted for some time. I couldn't eat well after this experience, although I wanted to.
>
> The following day I went to the *dmag dpon* and I shook again. About seventeen or eighteen candidates for *lha pa* shook at first. I asked my father to burn *bsang* at home because I had lost faith in deities, even though elders told me there were deities. I didn't believe in the existence of deities before my possession.
>
> My father asked A myes Sha bo skyabs about me. He told my father I was the right candidate and said that the way I shook was different from the other candidates. He claimed the way I shook was the right way.[313]

Mkha' byams rgyal:

> On the twenty-second day of the sixth lunar month in 2001, the Bod skor and Dkar rtse gdong *lha pa* gathered all the Ha ra pA thur players in the *dmag dpon* and asked them to take the clothes off their torsos. Village elders and the two *lha pa* asked Sha bo tshe ring to take off his amulet. We noticed Lcags byams was shaking. He jumped in the air and collapsed. The Bod skor *lha pa* recognized him as the new Ha ra pA thur *lha pa*. The selection was finished. Lcags byams was chosen very quickly. It should take much longer to choose a *lha pa*.

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[312] Literally 'grandfather family,' an honorific reference to A myes Ba rdzong. *Tshang* was also added after the names of lamas.

[313] Sha bo skyabs told us that the Dkar rtse gdong *lha pa* should shake first from the head.

Snying bo rgyal:

> All the players from Bod skor and Dkar rtse gdong came to Ha ra pA thur for *klu rol* on the twenty-second day of the sixth lunar month in 2001. We were resting on the threshing ground when the Bod skor *lha pa*, Snying lcags rgyal, came and asked all the players from Ha ra pA thur born between 1966 and 1986 to gather inside the *dmag dpon*. He asked us to take all the clothing off our torsos and kneel before the door after we arrived in the *dmag dpon*. Elder onlookers were asked to chant the Ha ra pA thur *bsang* scripture, burn *bsang* and juniper branches, beat gongs and drums and shout. The Bod skor *lha pa* first blew on a handful of wheat grain, threw it at us several times and spat liquor on us. After the current Ha ra pA thur *lha pa* Lcags byams began shaking, he was called by the Bod skor *lha pa* to the front of our group and the *lha pa* tied a *gos btags* around his neck.

WEAPON DOOR OPENING.[314] The first time a *lha pa* was cut or stabbed was called 'weapon door opening.' This was often conducted by a lama or a possessed *lha pa* as described in the following three accounts:

Mkha' byams rgyal:

> When choosing a new *lha pa* in 1954 in Ha ra pA thur, Lha pa Lcags byams conducted weapon door opening for Dar rgyas. He would become the new *lha pa*. All the young village men gathered in the shrine, where they stayed for three or four days. Snying byams rgyal was the *lha pa* candidate because he had *lha rgyud*. Men helped him wash his body with juniper water. Snying byams rgyal shook but couldn't be possessed. Instead, Dar rgyas became possessed, then de-possessed.
>
> Dar rgyas couldn't be possessed completely in the *dmag dpon*. Lcags byams took him to Snying byams rgyal's home, where he put him into trance. When Dar rgyas was shaking Lcags byams used a sword to cut Dar rgyas' head. Usually the head is cut vertically, but because Dar rgyas

[314] *Mtshon sgo 'byed pa*.

was shaking his head the sword cut horizontally. It was a very big gash and it still frightens me today to think of it. Then Lcags byams took Dar rgyas to the shrine holding his hand. Both were in trance. Both were de-possessed after arriving at the shrine.

The head was cut because possession couldn't last long. Cutting increases the quality of possession. The moment after the *lha pa* is cut he feels frightened. The fear helps him become possessed completely. If the *lha pa's lus lha* is powerful it can interfere with possession by other deities. The *lus lha* becomes afraid of the mountain deity and then the mountain deity enters more easily.

Sha bo tshe ring:

We completed all the performances at the shrine during *klu rol* in 1949. I was spontaneously possessed where *lha pa* often become possessed at the crossroads and then taken to A lags Ban sngags tshang, who was staying in Gling rgya on retreat at the sky burial site. He stayed there for three months. He meditated for seven days without food or water. I spent almost three months with this lama.

There were five *lha pa* candidates at that time. We stayed in the *dmag dpon*. The lama first tied his monastic shawl[315] around each candidate's head, then he cut us three times. It is easier to be possessed when the lama cuts the *lha pa's* head. It opens the door for the deity. After five or six days I was the only remaining candidate, though I was not possessed completely. The lama chose me. I drank juniper water and washed with it. I was not allowed to go outside the shrine or meet other people for three months.

I took a sword from a statue in 1958. I don't know how I took the sword. I stabbed myself for the first time. The sword went through my belly. It did not come out of my back but people could see the sword almost penetrating the flesh in my back. I ran into the wall to drive the sword deeper. I walked with the sword in my belly.

I met Reb gong Sku phyogs tshang[316] every year, sometimes before and after *klu rol*. I explained to the lama

[315] *Gzan*.
[316] From Rong bo Monastery.

that it was dangerous for me to stab myself and asked if I could stop. The lama thought the deity needed this. He didn't let me stop. Instead he gave me a protection amulet.[317]

Lha lung thar:

I discovered after I was de-possessed that A lags Ban sngags tshang had cut me on the forehead with a knife. I knew this because blood was on my face. I felt bad about it. I had heard about *lha pa* being cut before this. My forehead became numb. After three or four days I recovered.

When the current Ri rtsa *lha pa*, Sha bo tshe ring, was chosen by the sixth Rdzong dkar ma Ni ba, villagers asked the lama to cut the *lha pa's* head. He said it was enough that the *lha pa* could be possessed. I also refused to cut the *lha pa* because I was afraid. If *lha pa* cut themselves this can make possession easier and the *lha pa* can always be possessed by main deities, rather than tea or liquor deities.[318]

VOW COMMANDING.[319] The six accounts below describe the process of lamas investing *lha pa* and the reasons for investment:[320]

Sha bo rnam rgyal:

It is necessary to take *lha pa* to lamas. The *lha pa* might be lying. The lama first asks the people accompanying the *lha pa* to put him into trance, then he gives the *lha pa* such instructions as do not hurt sentient beings, do good to people and so on. Next he knots a *kha btags* around the *lha pa's* neck, puts a vase on his head and pours water on his

[317] *Srung skor*, offered by the lama to protect the *lha pa* from injury and death by stabbing.

[318] *Ja lha* and *chang lha* were considered lesser deities that could possess *lha pa*.

[319] *Bka' bzhag dam bzhag*.

[320] Peter (1978a) discusses relationships between lamas and Tibetan mediums.

tongue. The lama may order the deity to leave. The deity always leaves at this time. Deities must obey the lama.

Mkha' byams rgyal:

First the *lha pa* should be possessed in the lama's presence. The lama takes a handful of barley, blows on it and throws it at the *lha pa*. He will become de-possessed if the quality of possession is poor. If *lha pa* are possessed by tea or liquor deities, they cannot remain possessed in front of the lama. If the *lha pa* cannot keep possession, the lama will refuse to verify his authenticity. The lama asks the *lha pa* such questions as "Who is the deity possessing you? What is the origin of the deity? What is the purpose of your possession?"

A lags Ban sngags tshang beat a *lha pa* named Lha lung thar from Lha khang Village with a whip. This had the same purpose as throwing barley; to test the *lha pa's* quality of possession. The *lha pa* becomes more active as the quality of possession increases. Then the *lha pa* takes an oath from the lama. The *lha pa* promises not to lie. The *lha pa* shouldn't reveal who the thief is if there is theft in the village.[1] *Lha pa* repeat these promises when they speak. They state which lama they took oaths from and what rules were made by the lama. The lama puts a vase on the crown

[1] This was to avoid conflict between villagers. The Bod skor *lha pa* revealed who had committed a theft during *klu rol* in Bod skor Village in 2002. During the same *klu rol* he gathered all male *klu rol* players on the Ha ra pA thur threshing ground on the twenty-second day of the sixth lunar month. A lags Grub chen tshang had given Ha ra pA thur a yak that was subsequently stolen. Some trees belonging to the village had also been stolen. The *lha pa* again wanted to reveal the thieves' identities, but old men present did not agree that the *lha pa* should name them. Bod skor villagers then invited A lags Shar gdong tshang from Bya khyung Monastery, Dpa' lung (Hualong) County, Mtsho sngon Province, to encourage the *lha pa* not to reveal the identity of thieves in the future.

of the *lha pa's* head. The lama reads the 'Vase Consecration'[322] scripture over the water, pours it on the *lha pa's* tongue, ties a knotted string around the *lha pa's* neck and asks the *lha pa* to be de-possessed. *Lha pa* always become de-possessed at this time if they are real. The quality of possession increases if *lha pa* are taken to more lamas.

Lha lung thar:

A lags Ban sngags tshang spent all afternoon putting me into trance. He tied his monastic shawl around my neck and held the shawl and a drum in his left hand. He had a plate of wheat seed. He beat the drum and threw the wheat toward me when he put me into trance. There was a *ma Ni* attached to the shrine where we stayed. We cooked there with the lama, a monk and three or four cooks from the village. The lama poured water from a vase. I drank it and washed with it. The lama stayed in the village five or six days, then he took me to Ko'u sde. We stayed in the assembly hall where the lama lived. There were five *lha pa* there; two *lha pa* from Gling rgya, one from Spyang lung and another from Lcang skya. The lama didn't let me go home for almost a month.

We all washed our bodies everyday. The lama put us into trance once or twice a day. He had us all sit in front of him while he chanted. He threw grain at us and sprinkled water on us. I didn't have any problem with possession after this.

Villagers also took me to the fourth A lags Zhabs dkar ba tshang from G.ya' ma bkra shis 'khyil Monastery.[323] He put me into trance and made rules. He said, I was told later, that I shouldn't name thieves, shouldn't lie, should be possessed only by my main deity, that the main deity shouldn't be replaced by the deities' subjects, that I should help villagers and so on.

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[322] Bum sgrub.

[323] G.ya' ma bkra shis 'khyil Monastery, Zho 'ong dpyi Township, Reb gong.

Sha bo tshe ring:

> The reason that I met so many lamas and received knotted *kha btags*[324] from them was to resist possession by tea and liquor deities. I met many lamas who made rules by talking to me during possession. They gave me knotted *kha btags* that resist possession by other deities. This made it possible for me to stab and cut myself without injury.[325]

Lha 'bum rgyal:

> I was taken by villagers to A lags Bse tshang in Mgar rtse.[326] Almost all village households had tractors by that time and adult male villagers escorted me to Mgar rtse by tractor. The lama put me into trance, announced that I was the best among the *lha pa* candidates and said that I would be the village *lha pa* from that day on.
>
> The lama also suggested that villagers send me on a pilgrimage to Ho ba rta mgrin rang byon[327] in Kan su'u. Villagers promised that they would pay all the costs. I went there with my brother. The trip cost five hundred RMB. We went to Bla brang[328] as well. Villagers paid half of the cost, and my family paid the rest.

Mkha' byams rgyal:

> We invited a lama named A lags Rong bo tshang[329] to invest Lcags byams. The higher lama, A lags Grub chen tshang, was in the hospital in Zi ling. At first the lama was sitting in the *dmag dpon* in front of the altar. Lha pa Lcags byams kowtowed three times, shook and collapsed. He couldn't be

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[324] *Mdud pa*.

[325] See Dpal ldan bkra shis and Stuart, 1998:38.

[326] Mgar rtse Village, Mgar rtse Township.

[327] We were unable to locate this place.

[328] Bla brang Bkra shis 'khyil Monastery, Bsang chu (Xiahe) County, Kan lho Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Kan su'u Province.

[329] The fifth incarnation of A lags Rong bo tshang, Rong bo Monastery.

possessed again. The lama said he had no experience with this, and suggested villagers take Lcags byams to A lags Grub chen tshang.

Ngag sgo 'byed pa. Sha bo skyabs describes 'speech opening:'[330]

> The *lha pa* often speaks after lamas chant scripture.[331] Our A myes Dmag dpon[332] says "*A da a da*,"[333] when a *lha pa* first speaks. The *lha pa* I knew in Dkar rtse gdong such as Klu byams rgyal, Mkha' byams, Sha bo tshe ring and Lha 'bum rgyal all said this when they first spoke. Klu byams rgyal and Mkha' byams were taken to 'Tsho 'du grub chen tshang. He opened their speech for the first time.
>
> We took Sha bo tshe ring to the previous 'Tsho 'du grub chen[334] in Sge'u steng Monastery. He put the *lha pa* into trance, but failed to open the *lha pa's* speech. There was a mountain slope below the monastery. We were sent to the slope top, from where we could see the A myes Dmag dpon shrine, to burn *bsang* and many offerings provided by the monastery.[335] We tried to put Sha bo tshe ring into trance there, but he didn't become possessed. Then the lama told us that he couldn't control the *lha pa* and suggested we take Sha bo tshe ring to A lags Bse tshang. He said, "A lags Bse tshang is the right lama for the Dkar rtse gdong *lha pa*."

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[330] The first time a *lha pa* spoke while in trance was called *ngag sgo 'byed pa*, 'mouth opening' or 'speech opening.'

[331] Sha bo skyabs did not know what scripture the lama chanted.

[332] Referring to a *lha pa* possessed by A myes Ba rdzong.

[333] Sha bo skyabs was unsure of the meaning. He said that it sounded like the colloquial Chinese term *a da* 'father.'

[334] He was the sixth incarnation of A lags Dar grong tshang.

[335] Sometimes a lama's power can hinder the *lha pa's* ability to become possessed. Therefore, the lama probably sent the *lha pa* and villagers outside, hoping that the distance from the lama would allow for possession.

Lha pa Sha bo tshe ring tried to open his speech by himself after we returned home, inside the *dmag dpon*. He writhed and rubbed his body with his hands in front of the statues. He said "*a da*" one or two times, but he couldn't speak.

Later, we took him to A lags Bse tshang who was then around thirteen or fourteen years old. He was sitting next to his teacher.[336] We explained the failure with Lha pa Sha bo tshe ring's speech opening in front of 'Tsho 'du grub chen tshang. We also explained that A lags Bse tshang himself was the root teacher[337] for all previous Dkar rtse gdong *lha pa*. Then, A lags Bse tshang's teacher asked us to wait outside until he called us back. The house had two floors. We went to the courtyard to wait. When they called us back, A lags Bse tshang and his teacher had switched their seating positions. The teacher asked us to put the *lha pa* into trance. We recited the *bsang* scripture and after the *lha pa* became possessed the lama threw a handful of barley toward him. We put the *lha pa* into trance and the lama de-possessed the *lha pa* again and again.

It was very auspicious. There was a cuckoo-clock hung on a pillar in the room and it sounded simultaneously as the *lha pa* jumped in the air and became possessed most vigorously. It was the first time that I had heard that kind of sound from a clock. Then the lama opened the *lha pa's* speech and the *lha pa* spoke saying "*A da*, *a da*."[338]

Around 1980 or 1981, I met A lags Bse tshang and he asked, "Was the *lha pa* helpful after we opened his speech?" I replied that the *lha pa* was very helpful. I explained that we always depended on the *lha pa* in cases of sicknesses, conflicts and so on. I said that the *lha pa* was our only option when we needed help. There was no one else to go to.

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[336] The teacher was sitting in a higher seat than A lags Bse tshang.

[337] *Rtsa ba'i bla ma*, meaning the lama had been the most important lama for the Dkar rtse gdong *lha pa* for many generations.

[338] The *lha pa* also said other things but Sha bo skyabs could not remember what they were.

Snying bo rgyal describes lama's control over *lha pa*:

> The lama has complete control over the *lha pa*. People around Ha ra pA thur believe that Ba rdzong is a very mighty deity. Whenever people pass the Dkar rtse gdong *dmag dpon* on the road from Smad pa to Rong bo, men remove their hats, women take the scarves from their heads and untie the braid wrapped around their heads.[339] The first A lags Grub chen tshang[340] rode a horse past the Dkar rtse gdong *dmag dpon* without dismounting before 1958. His horse died immediately.[341] A lags Grub chen tshang was enraged, went inside the *dmag dpon* and knotted a *kha btags* around the neck of the deity statue. Then the lama left for his monastery.
>
> The Dkar rtse gdong *lha pa* was unable to speak when he should have. Villagers knew the lama's horse had died, so they went to the monastery to ask him why the *lha pa* could not speak. Villagers said, "ever since your horse died the *lha pa* cannot speak. Why?"
>
> A lags Grub chen tshang explained that the deity's neck was tied. The lama cursed the deity, saying, "Bad Chinese, not to let an old man ride a horse. There is a knotted *kha btags* around his neck, untie it and he can speak."[342] After the *kha btags* was untied the Dkar rtse gdong *lha pa* was able to speak easily.

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[339] This was done out of respect for A mye Ba rdzong.

[340] His full name was 'Tsho 'du Sngags 'chang rdo rje rnam rgyal.

[341] The lama failed to show adequate respect for the deity by not dismounting.

[342] "Rgya *rtsog, mi lo lon rta byon gi mi 'jug a, ske na mdud pa zhig yod, de long dang ngag khrol ni red*."

REMOVAL OF COMPLETE DEMOLITION.[343] The following two accounts describe the removal and destruction of curses.

Mkha' byams rgyal:

> A curse can be created by placing widow's hair, the earth from under a widow's shoes, blood from a leper, or *lang kha*[344] inside a dog, pig or monkey's skull. The skull can also be replaced with a triangular-shaped brick. The brick is hollow and has a lid.[345] If cursed, people become ill and/ or have accidents. A family who thinks they are cursed goes to a person who can divine.[346] The person divining might suggest that the family go to a *lha pa* and ask him to find the curse, which good *lha pa* can find.
>
> A *lha pa* first finds the area where the curse is, stabs four knives in the ground in a one to two meter square in the four cardinal directions around the curse. Sometimes the curse can move and this prevents it from moving. Then he digs. I once saw a *lha pa* digging with a spear. Sometimes

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[343] *Rnam par*, the short form of *rnam par rgyab pa*, 'complete demolition,' together with *len pa* 'removal' translates as 'removal of complete demolition.' This term described the action of finding and destroying curses.

[344] We were unable to translate this term for a piece of paper depicting the figure of a person with a huge belly. The names of those targeted were written on the person's body. The paper was called *lang gzugs* before the targeted person's name was written on it (see figure 24).

[345] This was a homemade, baked, rectangular, red earth brick.

[346] *Sngags pa*, lamas, and some old men, e.g., Sha bo klu 'bum from Sdong skam and G.yang 'bum rgyal from Khyung bo used dice, prayer beads and black and white stones for divination in 2008.

he sniffs at the earth until he finds the curse and then he opens it.

Sdong skam Village invited a *lha pa* from Khri ka[347] to find a curse in 1957. He found it under the *lab tse*. I saw the *lha pa* find the curse. He first tried to read it but couldn't because it was wet. He burned the curse in the area it was found, asked villagers to bring a gun and shot a bullet into the ashes of the curse, dispersing them. Villagers gave *lha pa* about fifteen RMB and sometimes they gave grain as payment.

Sha bo skyabs:

The *lha pa* found a curse in front of the retreat house[348] under a large black boulder. Lha pa Mkha' byams and Lha pa Klu byams rgyal became possessed and led several villagers there. Four people had knives with them and one person had a gun. The *lha pa* asked villagers to stab the knives in the four cardinal directions around the boulder. Then the *lha pa* dug a hole with swords underneath the boulder and reached into the hole. One *lha pa* took something out, threw it on the ground and collapsed. He rolled down the slope to the threshing ground. His right eye was bleeding. His older brother tried to help him stand. The other *lha pa* suggested that they recite the *bsang* scripture so the *lha pa* would again be possessed. The de-possessed *lha pa's* fingers then began shaking [349] and he was again possessed.

The curse was in a ten centimeter long metal pipe, two centimeters in diameter. The paper was rolled inside the pipe and had something written on it. The paper disintegrated after the *lha pa* removed it from the pipe. The

[347] Khri ka (Guide) County, Mtsho sngon Province.

[348] A retreat for nuns with no formal name. Local people referred to it as *mtshams khang* 'retreat house.' It was a kilometer east of Dkar rtse gdong.

[349] Indicating that possession started from his hands. See Berglie, 1976:90.

lha pa asked the villagers to take the pipe and paper to Thig mo nang[350] and bury it near the river.

CURING DISEASE. The following five accounts from Mkha' byams rgyal describe various methods *lha pa* used to cure diseases:

Puppy Removal.[351]

A *lha pa* from Khri ka was invited to cure disease on the seventh day of the tenth lunar month in 1957. A wolf from Zhon 'phong[352] had bitten a donkey, which then went mad. People who looked at the donkey or the wolf could become mad. If people saw the mad animal they went to a mountain, e.g., Gong mo kha[353] where they were cured by hearing the call of a 'rocky ptarmigan,'[354] or invited a *lha pa* to take blood from the patient's back. This was heavy blood called 'puppy.'[355] The *lha pa* cut the infected person's back with a knife, then sucked the blood out of the person's back, spit it (often into a bowl of milk), where it assumed the shape of a puppy. People believed heavy blood in the back was not a serious problem, but the infected person became mad once the blood moved to the heart.

Lha mo rgyal from Sdong skam saw the mad wolf. The blood had moved to her heart. The Khri ka *lha pa* shot her in the belly with a rifle to release the heavy blood from her body. She collapsed but was unhurt. He also shot the

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[350] An area between Dkar rtse gdong and Seng ge gshong, Rong bo.

[351] *Khyi phrug len pa*. For descriptions of similar activity see Berglie, 1976:96-98 and 100-101, 1982:155-157 and 162-163 and 1989:362 and Bellezza, 2005.

[352] Zhon 'phong was the colloquial term for Zho 'ong or Zho 'phang, which referred to Zho 'ong dpyi Township, Reb gong County.

[353] This is a mountain northeast of Ha ra pA thur.

[354] *Rdza kha gong yag*.

[355] *Khyi phrug*.

donkey, which was cured by the shooting and unharmed by the bullet.

Red Purification.[356]

I saw a *lha pa* do a ritual to cure leprosy in 1954 or 1955 in Ha ra pA thur. A *sngags pa* was chanting near a spring. He had made snake figures out of *rtsam pa* and put them in the spring to pray for rain, but he had upset the water deities[357] and therefore had gotten leprosy. The Kho tshe[358] *lha pa* was invited to this man's home in Ha ra pA thur. I was on the roof watching secretly through the skylight. The patient was sitting on the floor. The *lha pa* boiled rapeseed oil in a fire at the base of the stove. The *lha pa* drank one mouthful of *chang*[359] and spit it into the pot after the oil boiled. This caused an explosion that filled the whole room. The *lha pa* had a drum with him. He fanned the drum once, shouted and the flames collapsed into the pot like magic. The fire didn't touch the infected man and the ritual cured him.

Metal Incantation.[360]

Lha pa used metal like a knife or scythe to cure skin disease or sore bones. The *lha pa* first put the metal into the fire until it became red, then he licked it, which made a sizzling sound. Then he blew on the infected area, which usually cured the patient.

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[356] *Btso dmar*.
[357] *Klu*.
[358] Kho tshe Village, Zho 'ong dpyi Township.
[359] Colloquial term for *chang dkar* 'white liquor.'
[360] *Lcags sngags*.

Belly Stabbing.[361]

Sometimes *lha pa* stabbed themselves with a knife or spear to cure serious diseases. The *lha pa* spoke to his organs before he stabbed himself saying, "Lungs are white snow mountains, open a way with the *rtsa*. The liver is a dark rocky mountain, open a way with the *rtsa*. The bowels are auspicious coils, open a way with the *rtsa*."[362] He then asked people around him to beat the handle of a spear or knife into his belly with stones. He also ran into a wall or pillar to push the weapon further into his body. The weapon was removed by the patient's family members, both men and women, but mostly men.

I saw the Skyid tshang[363] *lha pa* stab himself with a spear in 1955-1956. It went through his belly and came out his back about ten centimeters. I touched the spear before it was removed. It was *nig nig nig*.[364] After the *lha pa* and others removed the spear, the *lha pa* blew on his fingers, rubbed the wound and it was healed. There was a red mark on his belly but no wound.

Pressing Soil.[365]

Local Tibetan families believe that if a specific piece of land is disturbed the water deities will be unhappy and bring harm to the offending party, whose bones may begin to hurt. The family first goes to a lama or other diviners. Sometimes they go to a doctor. The diviner might recommend a *lha pa*, who finds the disturbed piece of land and digs a hole there at night. The patient will be cured if the *lha pa* finds the

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[361] *Khog mtshon.*

[362] "*Glo ba gangs ri dkar po yin pas rtsa lam phyes, mchin pa rdza ri smug po yin pas rtsa lam phyes, rgyu ma bkra shis 'khyil ba yin pas rtsa lam phyes.*" The *lha pa* petitioned his body to be unharmed by the stabbing.

[363] Skid tshang Village, Rgyal bo Township.

[364] 'Softly, softly, softly.' A colloquial term indicating softness and movement, especially quivering.

[365] *Sa non pa.*

correct piece of land. This place cannot be disturbed again after the *lha pa* finds it.

My mother's foot hurt in 1949 or 1950. Lha pa Rta mgrin rgyal from 'Jam skor[366] was invited to our home, was possessed and then left to find the place that had been disturbed. It was next to our home in the garden. There was a prickly ash bush there. The *lha pa* made a *gter*.[367] He dug a hole about half a meter deep, put his head in the hole and spoke to the *klu*, insulting them. I only heard the words, 'blind (female) *klu*.'[368] He put the *gter* in the hole, then shoveled dirt into it. The *lha pa* returned to our home and claimed that Mother's foot would be fine.

The following three accounts describe other methods *lha pa* used to cure diseases:

Sha bo skyabs:

A woman named Lha lung mtsho had a daughter, Mkha' mo rgyal, in Dkar rtse gdong. I had just returned home from Rong bo one day when her family sent for me. I went there and saw that Mkha' mo rgyal's face and neck were swollen and it was hard for her to breathe. They requested that Lha pa Lha 'bum rgyal be possessed and we consented. The family burned silk and a grand *bsang* in the courtyard to invite the *lha pa* to become possessed. We went to the attached garden east of the house after he was possessed. The *lha pa* said that she was affected by soil.[369] He made a *gter* in a bowl, tied the bowl with white silk and knotted the silk underneath the bowl. The *lha pa* stabbed a sword into the ground, told us to dig a hole there and then bury the *gter* in the hole. The *lha pa* returned to the home, went to the patient, rubbed her face and hands, blew on her face and neck and spoke, saying that somebody would come at midnight. He told the patient not to be afraid of the person

[366] 'Jam skor Village was a kilometer north of Ha ra pA thur.

[367] A cloth bag containing a coin, brick tea and barley. *Gter* could also be made in a bowl or ceramic vase.

[368] *Klu zhar ma*.

[369] Affected by an unspecified spirit associated with soil.

because it was the master of the sickness. He added, "If the sickness does not become as clear as a mirror at daybreak tomorrow morning, there is no Dmag dpon Ba rdzong."[370] At that time, I worried about what the *lha pa* said, because I wondered if what he said would be true. The *lha pa* also said several other things, but I don't remember them. Then we returned home. The next morning the patient's symptoms were gone. She had dreamed of a person jumping over her.

Sha bo tshe ring:

> Once a woman from 'Jam was sick and was hospitalized in Zi ling. The family spent 50,000 RMB in hospital bills, but it didn't help. Her family members came to me, put me into trance and explained the situation. I told them she was possessed by a ghost who was the master of this sickness. I gave explanations about what scriptures should be chanted. The family invited monks to chant in their home. During lunchtime, one monk went to the village reservoir to bathe and drowned. The patient's disease was cured after that. The monk had taken the disease from the home with him.

Btsan kha. Sha bo rnam rgyal gave this account of curing *btsan kha*:[371]

> A person who suffers from *btsan kha* must consult a *lha pa* before any medicinal treatment or other religious healing rituals are performed. Only *lha pa* can cure *btsan kha*. Other methods make the disease worse and incurable. *Btsan kha* is caused by deities, demons, soil, water and *btsan*.[372] The

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[370] "*Nangs ka snga mo nam langs kyi dang po, nyi shar kyi rtse mo, me long bzhin du g.ya' ma dag na, khong* Dmag dpon Ba rdzong *med nas*."

[371] Also known as *btsan*.

[372] "*Tsi'u dmar po* and the other members of the *'Bar ba spun bdun* group are regarded …as leaders of all *btsan* demons, one of the most important classes of Tibetan demoniacal deities. The *btsan* are mostly represented as ferocious red riders wearing armor and riding red

masters of the sickness are *btsan*. After *lha pa* separate the masters of the sickness from the sickness, medicinal treatments may cure the illness.

Btsan kha strikes a patient's voice and ears causing muteness and deafness. *Btsan kha* may also affect the body causing half of the body to become paralyzed. Blood in half the body cannot flow through the veins.

All windows and doors of the room are closed to prevent any light from entering before *lha pa* conduct the ritual to cure *btsan kha*. *Lha pa* offer butter lamps, burn incense and beat pieces of metal together.[373] It is bad for a patient to hear the sound of a *dril bu*,[374] because it is made of bronze. This ritual may require a week. Increasing pain in infected areas and a decrease in numbness are indications that the ritual is curing the sickness.[375]

ROLES DURING *KLU ROL*

GOVERNING PERFORMANCES. The following two accounts describe how *lha pa* govern *klu rol* performances.

Snying bo rgyal:

> *Lha pa* supervised the players during the Ha ra pA thur *klu rol* in 2007. The *lha pa* punished players not wearing all required clothing, including a towel[376] and *'bobs nywa*

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horses. In the right hand they usually brandish a red lance with a flag of the same color, while the left hand throws the characteristic red 'snare of the *btsan*' (*btsan zhags*). The typical illness which the *btsan* are supposed to cause is colic (*btsan nad gzer thabs*)" (Nebesky-Wojkowitz, 1996:175).

[373] Sha bo rnam rgyal evaded answering further questions despite repeated inquiry into the details of this ritual.

[374] A common ritual bell used by Buddhist monks and *sngags pa* often accompanied by a *rdo rje*.

[375] This ritual was still being conducted in 2008.

[376] All *klu rol* players were required to wear a towel tied with *kha btags* on their heads.

lcibs[377] by beating players with a tree branch. The *lha pa* walked around observing the performances when *klu rol* players performed, beating those breaking rules and not following directions.

When we were once performing *aila yijitai* [378] (the players are required to bow down) during *klu rol*, the current Bod skor *lha pa*, Snying lcags rgyal, beat my back with a tree branch for not bowing low enough. The current Dkar rtse gdong *lha pa*, Lha 'bum rgyal, has beaten player's backs with the flag[379] handle until their shirts were broken for not wearing *klu rol* clothing. A man wearing sunglasses circumambulating the threshing ground had his sunglasses broken by Lha 'bum rgyal.

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[377] All *klu rol* players were required to wear *'bobs*, embroidered light blue socks, covering the shins and ankles and tied at the calves with *nywa lcibs*, a strip of black cloth tied around the ankles (See figure 39).

[378] This *klu rol* performance had no name. This term refers to what *klu rol* players shouted during the performance. Mkha' byams rgyal said that this Chinese rendering was correct, *aila* being a cry for the deity and *yijitai* translating as 'first rank stage,' indicating respect for the deity by offering the highest seat. However, in 2007 *klu rol* players did not understand the meaning of what they said. Many players said, "*Skyes lha an chu lo*." *Skyes lha* translates as 'natal deity.' We could not translate the last three syllables.

[379] The *ru dar* was a half-meter long triangular flag fastened to a meter long pole bearing a picture of a tiger or lion. Children often held these flags during *klu rol*, but the flags were also held by the person standing in front of the line of players, signaling their position as leader of the players.

Mkha' byams rgyal:

> The Ha ra pA thur *lha pa* was absent during *klu rol* on the twenty-first day of the sixth lunar month in about 1947.[380] The villagers didn't perform well that day. The Dkar rtse gdong *lha pa* was possessed early in the morning on the twenty-second, came to Ha ra pA thur and asked all the villagers to re-perform everything before the Dkar rtse gdong and Bod skor villagers arrived.

MOUTH SKEWER PIERCING.[381] *Klu rol* players had their facial cheeks pierced on the twenty-first day of the sixth lunar month in 2007. The *lha pa* decided how many players should be pierced and led selected players from the threshing ground to the *dmag dpon*. Then he took the skewers from the *dmag dpon* and spat on them with liquor to purify them. The *lha pa* grabbed players' left cheeks with his left hand while using his right hand to pierce them, one after another. After completing *lha rtsed* performers returned to the *dmag dpon*, and the *lha pa* removed the skewers from their cheeks.

The *lha pa* has given a piece of silk to each person who was pierced to differentiate them from those who were not pierced beginning in 2005.

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[380] The Ha ra pA thur *lha pa* was outside the village cultivating poppies for opium production. The Reb gong County government outlawed the planting of poppies after 1949 consequently, opium production was done secretly in the mountains and sold secretly. Chinese Communist soldiers found and destroyed the poppies in 1953. Mkha' byams rgyal said that the grain from a field could not be burned as *bsang* or *tsha gsur* if poppies were planted there. He also claimed that local people neither planted poppies nor sold opium, but worked for others who did.

[381] *Kha 'bugs rgyag pa*.

Snying bo rgyal describes being pierced during *klu rol*:

> I have never been pierced by a *lha pa*, but I've been pierced by village elders. Nobody forced me or even asked me to be pierced the first time. Children my age were being pierced and I did so voluntarily. I was a little afraid the moment before I was pierced and, when the skewer penetrated my cheek, it was painful. It was also painful later when it was removed. Children asked old men in the village who had experience to pierce them. Old men pierce carefully and slowly. I was more afraid to be pierced as I grew older and ran away from the threshing ground when players were pierced.

CONDUCTING BZLOG SHOG. *Bzlog shog* was performed by Rin chen rdo rje on the eighteenth day and was then performed by Lha pa Lcags byams on the nineteenth and twenty-first days of the sixth lunar month in 2007. Rin chen rdo rje pretended to be possessed as villagers requested.[382] When there was no Ha ra pA thur *lha pa* before 2001, Rin chen rgyal acted as though he were possessed while drunk and performed *bzlog shog*. While performing *bzlog shog*, players faced Reb sa[383] Village, to curse Reb sa villagers who were considered Ha ra pA thur's enemies. Snying bo rgyal gave the following account of the two villages' conflict:

> Ha ra pA thur and Reb sa fought over land and several people from both villages died. Rdo rje 'bum from the Ru 'og ma portion of Ha ra pA thur and Phyi ga ya lo[384] from

[382] Villagers did not ask the *lha pa* to be possessed at this time. We do not know why.

[383] Reb sa Village, Hor nag Township, Reb gong County was situated on a mountaintop west of Ha ra pA thur. It was taboo to eat or marry with someone from that village because Ha ra pA thur people were killed by Reb sa villagers, thus Reb sa was cursed during *klu rol*.

[384] This is a phonetic rendering of the man's nickname.

> Reb sa shot at each other with rifles. While one was shooting, the other kept his body exposed.[385] Finally, in the afternoon, Rdo rje 'bum was shot in the head, which was wrapped in a towel.[386] Villagers thought that his *dgra lha* was weaker than Phyi ga ya lo's.

In his history of Ha ra pA thur Mkha' byams writes:

> Once [Ha ra pA thur Village] fought with Reb sa Village, and A myes Rdo rje 'bum's son, Bsod nams rgyal, and Ban log ring ba from Rgya tshang Clan were killed in the battle. [Ha ra pA thur] gained territory from Rdo ris zur kha[387] as compensation. Until 1958 [Ha ra pA thur] Village *'khyig bdag* collected payment [wheat grain] for grass and water [from Reb sa Village].

The *'khyig bdag* group put a bundle of straw on the northwestern threshing ground[388] during *klu rol* on the eighteenth day of the sixth lunar month in 2007. A *'khyig bdag* member took the *tog lha* there, while Rin chen rdo rje led the *klu rol* players and rushed to the threshing ground with the *bzlog shog* while beating a gong. The straw was burned there and Rin chen rdo rje burned the *bzlog shog* paper in the fire facing Reb sa. Afterward, participants clapped their hands and performed *be ha*[389] and *aila yijitai* facing west.

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[385] This allowed for a comparison of *dgra lha* power.

[386] Snying bo rgyal remembers old men wearing towels folded on their heads, similar to towels worn during *klu rol*, but untied. The bullet grazed the towel and did not harm Rdo rje 'bum.

[387] A place name in Reb sa Village.

[388] Generally it is at the same location every year. See Appendix Four.

[389] This *klu rol* performance had no name. *Be ha* refers to what was shouted by *klu rol* players during the performance.

Lha pa Lcags byams led *klu rol* players to the west threshing ground in Ru 'og ma [390] and repeated the foregoing actions on the nineteenth day of the sixth lunar month.

Klu rol players stood, one line facing south and a second line facing north on the twenty-first day of the sixth month. *Bsang* was burned between the two lines. Sha bo tshe ring[391] recited the Ha ra pA thur *bsang* scripture, twisting the *bzlog shog* and facing Reb sa. When Sha bo tshe ring had almost finished reciting the *bsang* scripture, Lha pa Lcags byams took the *bzlog shog* from his hand and thrust the *bzlog shog* forward while leaping to the west. He repeated this action several times then rushed to the northwest threshing ground,[392] accompanied by all *klu rol* players. The *lha pa* put the *bzlog shog* frame into the burning straw and burned it facing Reb sa. Players clapped their hands and performed *be ha* and *aila yijitai* while facing Reb sa as on the eighteenth and nineteenth days.

Sha bo tshe ring describes *bzlog shog* as a means to resist storms:

> *Lha pa* must conduct *bzlog shog* in Gling rgya. The *lha pa* must first find the direction where the storm will come from and then conduct *bzlog shog* in that direction. The *lha pa* smears blood from his head on the paper when *bzlog shog* begins. Villagers once thought that it was not good for me to cut my head and provided a bottle of sheep blood, thinking that it could replace the blood from my head, but I refused it.

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[390] See Appendix Four.

[391] Sgrol ma skyabs, tribal leader, was replaced by his sons, Lhun 'grub and Sha bo tshe ring in 2000.

[392] The same location as on the eighteenth day of the sixth month.

HONORING AND PUNISHING. Snying bo rgyal gives an account of Lha pa Lcags byams punishing villagers:

> On the nineteenth day of the sixth lunar month in 2007, when *klu rol* players were circumambulating the courtyard of Bdud lha byams' home in the Thang ga portion of Ha ra pA thur, three or four people were drawn out of the circle by Lha pa Lcags byams, who scolded them for breaking empty bottles in the *dmag dpon* courtyard. He told them to pay money[393] as punishment. Certain elders begged the *lha pa* to reduce the amount to ten RMB and he agreed. All then paid the money except for one man who refused to admit to his offense. The *lha pa* became enraged, grabbed the man by the nape of his neck and took him to the threshing ground next to the village *dmag dpon*, where the *lha pa* said they had been drinking. The man still refused to admit drinking there. The *lha pa* then became more enraged, jumped in the air and became de-possessed.[394]
>
> A rgya Sangs bha complained to the accused man, telling him it was his fault the *lha pa* became de-possessed, and said that it was now his duty to put the *lha pa* into trance again. A rgya Sangs bha said the village was always on the *lha pa's* side. Then the man went home and returned with a tea brick and *gos btags* as compensation for offending the deity. Finally, villagers put the *lha pa* into trance again by chanting the *bsang* scripture.
>
> The *lha pa* called villagers who drank excessively and gambled to the *dmag dpon* during *klu rol* on the twenty-first day of the sixth lunar month in 2007. He told them to stop doing such things. He made them promise in front of him that they would stop and gestured, warning them not to repeat their misbehavior. The village secretary, 'Jam dbyangs rdo rje, interpreted the *lha pa's* gestures, saying, "The deity will shed the heart's blood."[395]

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[393] An amount exceeding ten RMB.

[394] The deity left the *lha pa* because the deity was unhappy.

[395] "*Snying khrag bzhes rgyu*" meaning "The deity will harm those who break their promises."

CONFLICT RESOLUTION. Snying bo rgyal gives an account of Lha pa Lcags byams resolving conflicts:

> There was a fight between two families in the Ru 'og ma portion of Ha ra pA thur over access to firewood in 2005, and one man's head was beaten with a stone. On the twenty-first day of the sixth lunar month during *klu rol*, the *lha pa* called the fathers from both families inside the *dmag dpon* and reconciled the dispute by fining one family 3,330 RMB as compensation for the victim.
>
> An argument erupted among *sngags pa* in the Ru 'og ma portion of Ha ra pA thur over which scriptures should be read for *gsang bdag* and *bka' brgyad* in 2007. The *lha pa* summoned all men over sixty years of age to the Ru 'og ma *ma Ni* during *klu rol* on the nineteenth day of the sixth lunar month in the same year. They gathered for almost an hour and discussed the argument. On the same day in the 'lodging family,'[396] the *lha pa* asked villagers to unite and asked all old *sngags pa* to perform *gar* together in the courtyard. On the twenty-second day of the sixth month, three old *sngags pa* were asked by the *lha pa* to perform *gar* on the threshing ground after Bod skor and Dkar rtse gdong players had left Ha ra pA thur. These performances were symbolic of the unity of the *sngags pa* and of the conflict's resolution.
>
> The central government, in accordance with the 'Socialist New Countryside' policy promulgated in 2005,[397] began covering Ha ra pA thur lanes with concrete in 2007.[398] Each family was required to contribute 700 RMB[399]

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[396] *Gnas tshang* was the home that was the final site for *klu rol* performances on the eighteenth and nineteenth days of the sixth lunar month.

[397] For more information on Shehuizhuyi Xinnongcun see: (http://sevencastles.spaces.live.com/blog/cns!7C5A2F3DB6C97D9A!7370.entry, accessed 10, 2007).

[398] The Reb gong County government provided cement and hired technicians and laborers to cover all lanes with concrete.

[399] This amount was decided upon after village leaders calculated the entire cost of the project. Each family in the Ru 'og ma portion of Ha ra pA thur was asked to

as local contribution. At the beginning of the project, in the Thang ga portion of Ha ra pA thur, villagers had difficulties widening the avenues, because this required damaging certain walls and homes. This created conflict about which avenues should and should not be widened. On the tenth day of the fifth lunar month in 2007, the *lha pa* became possessed spontaneously and led numerous villagers, especially elders, through the village, dictating through gestures which walls to damage in order to widen avenues. Although elders were hesitant to destroy the walls, younger villagers destroyed them immediately.[400]

Compensation was discussed in the *ma Ni*, about an avenue between two homes on the nineteenth day of the sixth month in 2007 during *klu rol*. A family's garden wall was damaged while widening the avenue. Ru 'og ma villagers promised to rebuild the wall and also promised to give the family 500 RMB as compensation. The *lha pa* advised elders to ask the family on the other side of the avenue to pay 300 RMB as compensation.

On the twenty-first day of the sixth lunar month during the 2007 *klu rol*, the *lha pa* suggested that the villagers build a new *dmag dpon*. He gathered villagers with government jobs in the *dmag dpon* one by one and asked them to contribute money to construct the new building. The *lha pa* tied *snyan shal* around their necks. People stated the amount of money they would contribute to the building of the new *dmag dpon* in front of the *lha pa*. When a person suggested a small sum, such as 500 RMB, the *lha pa* showed his fist, indicating that the person should be stronger, and asked for more. When the amount promised exceeded 1,000 RMB, the *lha pa* lifted his thumb, indicating an adequate contribution. The largest amount promised was from Mkha' byams rgyal, who promised

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pay 700 RMB for the cost of transporting sand from the bank of the Dgu chu to the village and for compensating damage to walls and for rebuilding those walls. The money had not been collected in early 2008.

[400] No compensation was paid to families whose walls or gates were destroyed, but the Reb gong County government hired laborers to repair them.

8,000 RMB.[401] He first promised 4,000, but the *lha pa* rejected this amount, which was increased to 5,000. 3,000 was promised by Mkha' byams rgyal's son, Sha bo tshe ring, as a 'family' contribution. Despite strain on the family's finances and disagreement between family members over the contribution, Mkha' byams rgyal felt he had no choice, because the *lha pa* demanded it. In total, 70,000 RMB was promised that day. The *lha pa* suggested that the village use this money to create a business lending money within and outside the village. Interest would be charged to generate income. All loans were to be repaid within three years.[402]

OTHER ACTIVITIES

LEADERSHIP AGAINST SOG RGYA. Mkha' byams rgyal gave the following account of the *lha pa's* role in struggles between local Tibetans and Sog rgya:

> Tibetans and Sog rgya lived together around 1920 in the location that is now Tho kyA.[403] There was a conflict between Sog rgya and local Tibetans over land. Lha pa Rdo rje told villagers that it was better to damage three village walls[404] and leave one wall standing, which meant leave some Sog rgya in Tho kyA to sell salt and chili.

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[401] Mkha' byams rgyal retired in 2008 and collected a pension from the Reb gong County government. The family also earned income from digging caterpillar fungus annually.

[402] The money had not been collected in early 2008.

[403] Bao'an Castle was built in contemporary Bao'an, Tongren County, Qinghai Province by a group of Muslim Mongolians in 1371 (http://www.china.com.cn /ch-shaoshu/index3.htm, accessed 7, 2007).

[404] Ha ra pA thur villagers used the word *mkhar* 'castle' when these walls were discussed. In Tho kyA in 2008, local Han referred to the three portions of the town as Chengnei 'Inside the Castle,' Chengwai 'Outside the Castle' and Xincheng 'New Castle.'

The *lha pa* led Ha ra pA thur villagers to a battle in which many Sog rgya and Tibetans died. When Ha ra pA thur villagers returned victorious, the *lha pa's* robe was full of bullets. He had protected villagers by blocking the bullets thus fewer Tibetans died.

The imam[405] was killed, became a ghost and suddenly possessed Lha pa Rdo rje, trying to kill him. Ha ra pA thur villagers burned *bsang* and asked Dpung nge ri lang to possess the *lha pa*. The deity entered the *lha pa*, who spoke, telling the villagers that they had realized the ghost had possessed him just in time, otherwise the ghost would have killed him.

There is a large Muslim cemetery in Tho kyA. Bao'an people[406] visited the cemetery in 2000 or 2001 and wanted to build a wall around it, but Tho kyA and Bod skor disagreed. If they built a wall, it meant that they owned the cemetery. Certain villagers claimed that there used to be a Bod skor Village shrine there. They asked certain Tho kyA residents and government officers to visit the location. The Bod skor *lha pa* became possessed, led people to a place and suggested villagers dig there. They found broken bricks, which proved the previous shrine's existence therefore, Bod skor won ownership of the land.

RAINMAKING. Sha bo rnam rgyal gave the following account:

Water deities under the ground send rain upward and deities in heaven send rain downward. The space between heaven and earth is full of *btsan*. Even though the water deities underground and the deities in heaven agree, the rain can be looted by the wind, [407] thus it can't rain without the allegiance of deities, water deities and *btsan*. The rain is also often snatched up by monks or *sngags pa* who are more powerful than the deities, taking rain to their areas.

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[405] *A dpon*. We could not identify this imam.

[406] Bao'an zu = Sog rgya.

[407] Sha bo rnam rgyal suggested that *btsan* controlled the wind.

There was a drought when I was sixteen years old in the fifth lunar month of 1953. Three Dkar rtse gdong *lha pa* named Lha pa Mig ser,[408] Sha bo tshe ring and Lo don 'grub (who had moved to Byang chub Village[409] and had retired from his position as *lha pa*), several villagers from Bod skor (including an old man named Ga chi lo) and I went to Sgo mang Spring near Bya dkar lung Village.[410] We went there to make rain. I was the youngest one and went because I was one of the *'khyig bdag* group that year.

The crops were only about half a meter high,[411] but they were about to ripen. We took wheat to the spring and showed it to the *lha pa*. We told them that the crops were about to ripen and explained the size and the height of the wheat. We told the *lha pa* that we were worried that people would die in famine and asked the *lha pa* to please ask for rain from the water deities' domain. We stayed at the spring for around ten days. Sha bo tshe ring was very young at that time, so Lha pa Mig ser conducted the ritual. Sometimes he became possessed and beat the drum at the spring. Many frogs came to the edge of the spring and gazed at the *lha pa*. The frogs varied in color. They were red, white and black-striped. I was a child and found them astonishing, so I observed them carefully.

A snake emerged from the spring one day and erected itself vertically. It was approximately half a meter tall in the spring center. It looked at the two *lha pa* who ordered us to bring *gos btags* and a *gter* from the tent where we were sleeping. The *lha pa* put them into the spring. I was amazed because I had never before seen such a thing.

While possessed Lha pa Mig ser told the deities that this area faced drought that year and that the crops were about to ripen but were not tall enough. He said people wouldn't have enough food and that they would die in famine. He repeatedly begged the deities for rain. The *lha*

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[408] A nickname, probably meaning Klu byams rgyal.

[409] Tho kyA.

[410] Tho kyA.

[411] When Sha bo rnam rgyal said this he gestured, indicating the height, which was approximately half a meter.

pa said, "One *ting phor*[412] of rain has been given, but the bowl of rain was taken away by a *dbon*[413] with a white robe. So, I beg and beg again that another bowl of rain be endowed."

The *lha pa* asked us where the rain should descend. Our elders suggested that it was better for our fields if the rain descended from the direction of Rka sar Village. The *lha pa* said that he would send the rain with the first ray of sun the following morning. That was the truth. I heard him say it personally and I can swear that I'm not lying. I was so surprised. On the following morning it truly rained with the first ray of sun. I found that the water from the drainage spout had filled a *zo*[414] when I returned home. The *lha pa* claimed after the rain that it was the only amount of rain that could be given. Nevertheless, we continued to stay at the spring for a few more days because villagers requested it.

We later learned that it had only rained a few drops in Bya dkar lung Village. Lha pa Mig ser became possessed one evening and told us that he had asked A myes Gnyan chen[415] to come to meet him early in the morning on the following day. The Bya dkar lung *lha pa* Rgya 'bu came the next morning to the place where we were staying. He was possessed by A myes Gnyan chen. After the Bya dkar lung *lha pa* arrived, the Dkar rtse gdong *lha pa* explained why it had rained so little in Bya dkar lung. He said that there were many *sngags pa* in the village who didn't believe in A myes Ba rdzong, therefore he[416] didn't send the rain to Bya dkar lung.

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[412] A small bronze bowl for offering water.

[413] Colloquial term describing Rnying ma ba practitioners.

[414] *Zo* is the colloquial term for *zo ba* 'bucket,' used for carrying water and churning milk. *Zo ba* varied in size but most commonly were a meter in height, forty centimeters in diameter at the top and thirty centimeters in diameter at the bottom. They were made of wood.

[415] He was venerated in Bya dkar lung Village.

[416] Referring both to the *lha pa* and to Ba rdzong.

CUTTING AND STABBING. Sha bo tshe ring gave this account:

> A deity expresses anger through stabbing and cutting. A storm was coming toward Gling rgya Village once during *klu rol*. I stabbed myself in the belly. I cut my head and tongue. I then removed the sword from my belly and stabbed it into the ground. I tore a piece of cloth from my shirt and burned it. This resisted the storm. The storm went to Ka ring.[417] We were in conflict with them over grassland. Almost 300 of that village's livestock were killed by the storm.
>
> There is a deity named A ma Klu mo in Gling rgya.[418] I marked the location for the A ma Klu mo shrine[419] on the twenty-fourth day of the sixth lunar month during *klu* rol. I shoveled earth at the four corners of a square and then shoveled at the center, indicating the size and location of the shrine. Some villagers claimed it was the wrong location. Later, when construction began, villagers found four 'pillar stones'[420] where I had shoveled. A *gter* was found under the ground at the center of the square. The silk from the *gter* was not rotten. I could do this because I cut myself. This all indicated that I was possessed by A myes Lha ri[421] himself. I cut my head eighteen times that day. My family didn't discourage the cutting because they believed in my possession. All the villagers strongly believed in my possession. No one tried to stop me. Deities are able to live without dying. There were no wounds because deities possessed me.

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[417] Ka ring Township, Zhong hwa County.

[418] See Dpal ldan bkra shis and Stuart, 1998:49-50

[419] Sha bo tshe ring claimed to have found the exact location of the original shrine.

[420] *Ka rdo* were round stones placed underneath pillars of houses and temples.

[421] See Dpal ldan bkra shis and Stuart, 1998:35-37.

POWERS OF PREDICTION. Mkha' byams rgyal gave this account:

> The Ha ra pA thur *lha pa* would cut himself by beating his forehead with the sharp edge of a knife blade, then speak on the first day of Rgya lo before 1958. He predicted what kind of harvest the village would have. When the Rka sar *lha pa* visited for *lha bsngo* the *lha pa* also predicted if there would be a harmful storm, sickness and so on during the year. Although the Rka sar *lha pa* didn't hear the Ha ra pA thur *lha pa's* predictions, the predictions always corresponded. The Ha ra pA thur *lha pa* also instructed young men on what they should and shouldn't do throughout the next year. For example, one year the *lha pa* said, "One's mouth is a golden door. It is also the ax to cut one's life away."[422]

ENHANCED LITERACY. The following two accounts describe *lha pa's* exceptional literacy while in trance.

Mkha' byams rgyal:

> I heard that in 1980 or 1981 the Sa dkyil *lha pa* gave an oration in Si khron Chinese[423] when possessed by A myes Ba rdzong.[424] A very old *thang ga* of Ba rdzong was in the Sa dkyil *dmag dpon*. The *lha pa* gave the *thang ga* to a Chinese *dmag dpon* in Rgya mkhar.[425] There were no valuable *thang ga* there because the *dmag dpon* had been recently rebuilt. The *lha pa* donated it to the *dmag dpon* while possessed. Only two Chinese men from Rgya mkhar could understand the Si khron dialect that was spoken. Even though the *lha pa* was illiterate in Chinese and Tibetan, after

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[422] "*Rang kha gser gyi sgo mo, rang srog gcod gi sta res*" meaning, "One should be careful of what one says."

[423] The Sichuan Chinese dialect.

[424] In 2008, it was widely believed that Ba rdzong came from Si khron.

[425] 'Chinese Castle,' referring to the area below Rong bo Monastery in Reb gong County inhabited by Han people.

he was possessed, he wrote classical Chinese characters with a brush on a piece of silk from bottom to top.[426]

Lha lung thar:

Some villagers think that the current Ri rtsa *lha pa*, Sha bo tshe ring, spoke Lha sa Tibetan when possessed, but others claim he was speaking literary Tibetan.

ANIMAL SACRIFICE. Sha bo tshe ring A gave the following account:

The Dkar rtse gdong *lha pa*, Lha 'bum rgyal, sacrificed a goat during *klu rol* on the twenty-second day of the sixth lunar month.[427] The goat was taken from outside the *dmag*

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[426] "When we talked to the Sa dkyil elders, all said they greatly admired the former *lha pa* of Sa dkyil who was the father of the current *lha pa*. This man, Lha skyabs tshe ring, became the *lha pa* when he was about 15 years old (before 1949) and had been the *lha pa* until the year of his death in 1988. His divine powers amazed the villagers on so many occasions. For example, he was illiterate, but once he was possessed by a Chinese mountain god called, Erlang, he wrote traditional Chinese characters" (Makley and Xire Jiancuo, 2007:10-11).

[427] A lamb and seventeen kids were sacrificed annually in Ha ra pA thur prior to 1951 or 1952. After 1952, thirteen animals a year were sacrificed. The third A lags Dar grong and Ha ra pA thur villager, Rta mgrin, decided to reduce the number of animals sacrificed because they thought that too many animals were being killed and that the animals were too young to be killed (lambs and kids were sacrificed because they were cheaper). This reduction in the number of animals killed caused a dispute because meat from some sacrificed animals was distributed among villagers for consumption and reducing the sacrifice reduced the

dpon where there were several one to two year old goats fenced in front of the *dmag dpon* gate. The goat was held upside down. One person held the horns and another held the legs. In trance, the *lha pa* took the goat's horns from the person who was holding them and slit the goat's throat. Then he cut the goat near the heart, used his hands to sever the veins around the heart and lungs, took the blood and sprinkled it toward the two Shan pa[428] at both sides of the *dmag dpon* door. He went into the *dmag dpon*, sprinkled blood toward Ba rdzong, sprinkled blood in the air and then burned the goat on a nearby *bsang* burner.[429]

ATTIRE

There was no difference between *lha pa* and ordinary people's daily attire in 2008. *Lha pa* did however, dress differently when they were possessed. It was expected that Ha ra pA thur *lha pa* would not cut their hair and wear it in

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amount of meat received. A lags Dar grong and Rta mgrin considered changing the *klu rol* sacrifice to one adult goat in 1954 or 1955, which they thought would be sufficient, but *klu rol* stopped in 1958 before this change could be initiated. No animals were sacrificed in 1963. Bod skor stopped sacrificing a live goat in 2007. No live animal sacrifice occurred in 2008.

[428] Shan pa ra mgo and Shan pa rtsi thung.

[429] Sha bo tshe ring commented that he thought this practice was bad and that he had heard it came from Bon religious practice and was not Buddhist. No live animals were sacrificed during *klu rol* in 2007 in Dkar rtse gdong. However, the meat of two sheep was burned to satisfy the deity on the twenty-first and twenty-third days of the sixth lunar month during *klu rol* in 2007. Drivers were responsible for providing funds to purchase meat and in 2006, fifteen RMB was collected from each driver in Dkar rtse gdong to purchase meat. A small piece of meat was burned daily throughout the year.

a queue before 1958.[430] When *lha pa* were about to be possessed their hair was unbraided. Lha pa Lcags byams' ritual clothing was provided by the village. He often wore a white Tibetan shirt[431] during *klu rol*. His head was uncovered. The *lha pa's* caretakers rolled his sleeves up to his elbows and tied them to his arms with string before he was possessed. The *lha pa* wore knotted *kha btags* crossed over his chest and back and tied at the hips. When Dkar rtse gdong, Bod skor and Ha ra pA thur *lha pa* visited each other during *klu rol*, the visiting *lha pa* was honored by other *lha pa* with *snyan shal* draped across one shoulder and tied under the armpit on the opposite side of the torso. *Lha pa* wore silk robes as some *klu rol* players did, but were more likely to wear yellow or yellowish robes because of the significance of their position.[432] Robe sleeves were tied around their waists. *Lha pa* often wore the robe hem higher than their knees so that they could move more easily. *Lha pa* wore common modern trousers as did other *klu rol* players. *Lha pa* wore white canvas shoes[433] and *'bobs nywa lcibs*, as was also required of all *klu rol* players.

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[430] Gling rgya, Sa dkyil and Sog ru *lha pa* maintained this tradition in 2008.

[431] *Tshi len bod bzo* refers to a shirt made by local tailors of thin cloth for summer and thick cloth for winter. The shirt had one button underneath the chin, one in front of the right shoulder and one underneath the right armpit.

[432] Yellow was associated with positions of religious authority. Lamas and *lha pa* wore yellow.

[433] Many Bod skor players and two Ha ra pA thur players wore traditional homemade embroidered shoes during *klu rol* in 2007, but most players wore white canvas shoes.

Sha bo rnam rgyal gave the following account:

> Once the young *lha pa*, Snying lcags rgyal, came to me and asked me whether he could change his cloth shoes for *bu'u ras*.[434] I was annoyed and said, "You are the *lha pa*; you are the one all villagers follow. If you change your shoes, then all the villagers will follow your example. It's not good to change your shoes."

The Bod skor *lha pa* wore cloth shoes, not *bu'u ras* during *klu rol* in 2007.

[434] Colloquial term for a local Tibetan felt boot.

CHAPTER FOUR

LOCAL PERCEPTIONS OF *LHA PA*

LHA PA AND CHANGE

The following four accounts describe changes in *lha pa* and local people's beliefs:

Lha lung thar:

> There have been no changes in *lha pa*. If *lha pa* can't tell the truth, they are not possessed by main deities. People are changing and this causes change in belief. The only difference between me and the current *lha pa*, Sha bo tshe ring, is that the current *lha pa* does not cut himself. Now I am not possessed. If I were, maybe I would train the current *lha pa* and make rules for him as made by a lama.

Sha bo rnam rgyal:

> *Lha pa* are the same but people have changed. Beliefs have changed. Now, people don't face difficulties and hardship so they don't believe in the deities. If villagers believed in deities, *lha pa* would be the same.
>
> The number of musical instruments used during *klu rol* is decreasing. Every clan owned a gong and almost every player had a drum before 1958. Now, the performances aren't complete. Some performances need a drum, but *lha pa* don't want to carry a drum because the weather is too hot. People are becoming lazier.
>
> Before, people relied more on religion. People circumambulated the village with scriptures if crops were attacked by insects or if there was sickness in the village. Now, they rely on science. Pesticides actually cause more insects. Recently, I found a worm in a pear. This never happened to me before. If people rely on religion, e.g., burn *bsang*, they can resist disaster.

Mkha' byams rgyal:

After de-possession, Ha ra pA thur *lha pa* could not remember anything prior to 1958. Today, some *lha pa* can remember. Better *lha pa* remember nothing.

Now, villagers burn *bsang* during *klu rol*, chant and ask the deity to possess the *lha pa*. Before, when it was time for *lha pa* to be possessed, they were possessed spontaneously, based on the quality of the *lha pa* and people's belief.[435] Society has changed, so people's behavior has changed. They have stopped believing in mountain deities and *lha pa*. This is due to the changes in 1958, the Cultural Revolution and so on.

Deities remain the same. My wife and I went to Lha sa to visit a relative named Mtsho rgyal ma many years ago. When we reached her home she told us she had had a bad dream in which a Han man wearing armor on his wrists, a Chinese robe[436] and riding a white horse visited her home. She worried that something bad would happen to her family. I believe that it was A myes Ba rdzong in the dream. He is my *zhang lha*,[437] and the *zhang lha* is always helpful. I explained to her that it was A myes Ba rdzong and she didn't need to worry. Mountain deities do maintain the same power, but people's beliefs have changed.

Villagers can choose another *lha pa*, but they don't because they don't want their sons to cut themselves. *Lha pa* cut themselves if they are truly authentic. Before, when families' economic conditions were poor, you could make money if you were chosen to be *lha pa*. Someone sick in the family was taken to the *lha pa* and if he could help them, he was given grain or money. Now villager's living conditions are better and nobody wants to be *lha pa*.

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[435] Snying bo rgyal suggested that the Rka sar *lha pa's* refusal to visit Ha ra pA thur indicates that they have some control over their possession and are therefore not authentic. He claimed that at the times a *lha pa* should be possessed the *lha pa* must become possessed, regardless of where he is.

[436] We are uncertain of the robe type.

[437] The maternal uncle's natal deity.

Now, the *lha pa* only functions during *klu rol*. Villagers gave the *lha pa* one hundred RMB to care for his body before 1958 because he cut himself, but villagers don't offer this money now because Lha pa Lcags byams doesn't cut himself. Instead, they offer twenty RMB for canvas shoes. In the future, villagers will not choose a *lha pa* unless he is automatically possessed and cannot become de-possessed. It's possible that the *lha pa* from the other two villages[438] might choose another *lha pa*, but if *lha pa* are not authentic it lessens villager's belief and they don't want another *lha pa*.

Lha pa Lcags byams isn't like previous *lha pa*. The quality of his possession is not good. Some people say he pretends. Real *lha pa* don't have a choice regarding possession. On the eighteenth and nineteenth days of the sixth lunar month in 2006 during *klu rol*, Lha pa Lcags byams said he didn't want to be possessed and was not possessed. Real *lha pa* know everything about *klu rol*, but the current *lha pa* doesn't know all the performances.

Villagers invited A lags Grub chen tshang once during the *lab tse* festival. Lha pa Lcags byams was not possessed at the right times, e.g., he was not possessed when *bsang* was burned before the arrows were put into the *lab tse*. He became possessed after these activities were finished and when villagers were resting. The current *lha pa* ran toward the lama. Villagers believe that a *lha pa* shouldn't stand with his head higher than a lama. The *lha pa* should bow down very low.

Sha bo tshe ring:

I was not allowed to eat food from other families. I stopped drinking and smoking after the first time I was possessed. After that, I only drank liquor during possession. I chanted scripture from the first day of the sixth lunar month until the completion of *klu rol* every year. A home was chosen and I needed to stay in that home from the twentieth day of the sixth lunar month, during *klu rol*. Three families were chosen according to financial condition and had to be within the clan that was hosting *klu rol*. The families drew lots to

[438] Dkar rtse gdong and Bod skor villages.

decide who received me. It was an honor for the family if they were chosen.

Lha pa have changed. People say that the current *lha pa* is pretending. Sometimes no blood comes when he cuts his head. People say he covers the blade with his finger. I could stay on the *tog lha* without help from other people.[439] The current *lha pa* needs help to climb the pole. I didn't drink, didn't smoke and chanted at night in the chosen home. *Thang ga* were accepted in the main room of this home. *Bsang* was burned in one hole of the stove and *tsha gsur* was burned in the other. Women were not allowed to enter the room or walk on the roof of the home. The current *lha pa* doesn't chant. He drinks liquor and beer, goes home and the next day during *klu rol* he smells of alcohol.

I was invited to people's homes to cure disease. Very few people invite the current *lha pa* to cure disease because villagers don't strongly believe in him. I wanted to train the current *lha pa* to perform but the current *lha pa's* grandfather didn't agree because the *lha pa* is not invited to villager's homes to give advice on disease. The grandfather resents me.

RTSA MI TSHANG

Snying bo rgyal gave the following account:

Lha pa can be possessed because they are 'missing a channel,'[440] suggesting a foolish or easily frightened person. If someone does something deemed foolish, they might be

[439] See Dpal ldan bkra shis and Stuart, 1998:48.

[440] *Rtsa mi tshang*. Related terms include *bla rsta mi tshang* 'missing the channel of the vital basis,' *bla rtsa* 'life force channel,' "Vein, the pulse of which can be used to indicate long or short life" and "*bla rtsa 'khum* 'shrinking life force,' 'to be frightened'" (Goldstein, 2001:744). For further discussion of *rtsa* in Tibetan mediums see Berglie, 1982:151-153, Diemberger, 2005 and Bellezza, 2005.

described as *rtsa mi tshang*.[441] This term is insulting and, although we say this about *lha pa*, we would never say *lha pa* were *rtsa mi tshang* in their presence.

PAYING *LHA PA*

The following three accounts describe how *lha pa* were paid.

Sha bo tshe ring:

> I was paid seventy-five to one hundred kilos of wheat and sometimes one hundred to 200 RMB per year. At times families gave ten to fifteen RMB or new clothes. The skin was given to me if villagers killed a sheep during *klu rol* or Rgya lo. I could sell it for twenty to forty RMB. I was paid fifteen to thirty RMB when I was invited to people's homes. I was paid more if the suggestion I made was helpful.
>
> If a *lha pa* is good and people believe in him he doesn't have to worry about life. On the other hand, *lha pa* have no choice about possession. They must go to a lama to ask permission to not become possessed.

Mkha' byams rgyal:

> Nine goats and one lamb were sacrificed during every *klu rol* from 1952 to 1958. The lower half of the sacrificed lamb and the lambskin were given to the *lha pa*. Villagers contributed one hundred RMB and canvas shoes to the *lha*

[441] Stuart, Banmadorji and Huangchojia, 1995:225 write: "Two explanations were offered as to why the present *lhawa* was chosen by the mountain gods. One was that he has one less air channel in his thigh than normal people and is thus particularly susceptible to possession." We have seen no indication of the belief that a *lha pa* has "one less air channel in his thigh." This explanation might stem from a rendering of *bla* 'life force' or 'spirit,' phonetically identical with *brla* 'thigh.'

pa during *klu rol* in 2007. All villagers must help the *lha pa's* family to complete the harvest in Bod skor.

Snying bo rgyal:

The Bod skor *lha pa* once complained that Ha ra pA thur villagers were not taking adequate care of their *lha pa* during *klu rol* and asked one of the *lha pa's* brothers to speak about the *lha pa's* financial situation. The brother said that the *lha pa* was from a poor family and that he could not care for himself financially. The only nutritious food they had was milk from one cow. He said that if villagers didn't want to take care of him, the *lha pa* would not be possessed. Then the Bod skor *lha pa* asked Ha ra pA thur villagers to give one hundred RMB to the Ha ra pA thur and Dkar rtse gdong *lha pa*. The Bod skor *lha pa* then complained that some villagers did not believe in the authenticity of the *lha pa* and scolded Ha ra pA thur villagers for their disbelief. He flung *shing rgyan* at the feet of each *klu rol* player to divine if they believed or disbelieved in the *lha pa*. He then separated the players into believers and disbelievers. The *lha pa* allowed the believers to enter the door of the *dmag dpon*, while excluding the disbelievers. I was one of the disbelievers.

LHA PA SELF-PERCEPTIONS

Lha lung thar:

I needed to cut myself twice a year, once during *klu rol* and once during *lab tse*. All my family members complained about the cutting. I asked permission from A lags Ban sngags tshang to not be possessed in 1957. He agreed and I was never possessed again. My eldest son started to be possessed when he was nine years old. I took him to the fifth incarnation of A lags Mchu dmar tshang and explained the situation after my eldest son shook during *klu rol* in the shrine. The lama gave my eldest son a *mdud pa*. Then my second son also shook. I wanted to take him to the lama but villagers disagreed, claiming they needed to hear what the lama said. My son could be the next *lha pa*. I visited the

lama with village elders and explained to him that my son shouldn't be possessed. The lama agreed and gave my son a *mdud pa*. Nothing has happened to my two grandsons during *klu rol*, but I often watched them. One reason I don't want my family members to be *lha pa* is because it is painful. *Lha pa* need to cut themselves. Villagers put *lha pa* into trance to find the thief when there is theft. This causes disputes.

I believe in the importance of *lha pa* and I must venerate deities, but I myself didn't agree to be possessed, so this poses difficult questions.

Sha bo tshe ring A:

I felt nothing about being *lha pa*, but villagers believed in my possession, because my grandfather, Lcags to,[442] had been one. My father told me that he was a very good *lha pa*. In daily life he was weak and often tied his robe sash loosely.[443] But once he was possessed he was not like his ordinary self anymore. He became much more agile and strict and villagers strongly believed in him.[444]

I didn't want to be a *lha pa* because they suffer. Often *lha pa* must keep clean by following such rules as not sleeping with widows and not wearing other people's clothes. If they don't follow these rules their lives will be endangered.

Once, when the Dkar rtse gdong *lha pa* Rnam lha tshe ring should have been possessed on the third day of the first lunar month and speak about village rules, he didn't want to be possessed. Instead, he went to a village in Rong bo by motorcycle with his wife to give Lo gsar[445] gifts. The motorcycle was crushed by a truck at the time he should

[442] A short form of Lcags byams.

[443] Indicating that he was lazy or weak.

[444] Lcags byams was the Ha ra pA thur *lha pa* until he committed suicide in 1958.

[445] 'New Year,' another name for Rgya lo. It also refers to New Year gifts.

have been possessed and both the *lha pa* and his wife died.[446]

Lcags byams:

I don't want to be *lha pa*. It's painful and can cause conflict among villagers. When villagers widened the lanes in Ha ra pA thur, some people complained that I was not possessed at the right times.[447] I asked permission to not be a *lha pa*, but the lama didn't agree. He said that I could only stop if the villagers agreed. They disagreed. I cannot work outside the village nor get a job because I must perform during *klu rol*. Villagers don't support me. My family is overlooked when there are government projects for poor families.

I haven't found any positive effects of being a *lha pa*. But once we had an accident after harvest when I and some other people went to Rka sar to work. Eighteen people were injured. I was injured least. The deity was protecting me.

Snying lcags rgyal:

I lost 6,000 RMB in 2007 because I had to dance in *klu rol* instead of hauling materials in my truck. I don't want to be *lha pa* but I have no choice.

Sha bo skyabs describes the role of *lha pa* as a contractual obligation:

When we were selecting the current Dkar rtse gdong *lha pa*, Lha 'bum rgyal, all candidates were required to put their thumbprints on a piece of paper next to their names before selection began. This contract ensured that if a young man between the ages of fifteen and thirty were chosen as *lha pa*, he could not refuse.

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[446] Sha bo tshe ring implied that the *lha pa* was killed because he was not possessed at the appropriate time. The Dkar rtse gdong *lha pa* and older Dkar rtse gdong villagers denied that this was the cause of his death.

[447] Lcags byams was possessed spontaneously at an unusual time.

Snying bo rgyal had the following dream October 21, 2007:

> In my dream last night, I was in a *dmag dpon*. The current Ha ra pA thur *lha pa* was being possessed in front of two statues. There were several statues in the *dmag dpon*. I only saw two statues to the right of the *dmag dpon*. I didn't pay attention to what the statues looked like. There were many villagers inside the *dmag dpon* facing the *lha pa*. I heard some talking that echoed. It was saying something about the *lha pa*; some complaints the audience had about the *lha pa*. I don't remember exactly what the voice said, but it was something about disbelieving the *lha pa*. I thought the speaking was from the *lha pa's* mouth, but I looked at the *lha pa's* mouth and it wasn't moving. I don't quite remember, but the *lha pa* was proud of the talk given. He was nodding repeatedly and pointing at the statue on the right. He meant that the oration was given by that deity. When I looked at the statue closely, I found that there was a rectangular hole in the statue's belly on the left and inside the hole there was a small tape recorder. The speaking was coming from the tape recorder. I even saw its red light. I thought that the speaking had been recorded by the *lha pa* himself, in a big empty room with many echoes. A man standing next to me on the left was the only man I paid attention to. His name is Sgom pa rgyal, and he is a teacher in Reb gong Middle School. The *lha pa* came and purposefully covered the recorder with his head when Sgom pa rgyal looked at the red light. I realized that the *lha pa* knew about the tape recorder.

CONCLUSION

This text has introduced the Reb gong *lha pa* role, especially in the focus area of Ha ra pA thur, and reveals the many and sometimes drastic changes that this role has undergone in the memory of village elders. Stuart, Banmadorji and Huangchojia write:

> Before the present *lhawa* assumed his role the villagers did indeed congregate for important festivals, but the main activity was drinking liquor. This was often a prelude to quarrelling and fighting, and when the festival dancing was to begin few people were willing to participate. Since the advent of the present *lhawa* this has changed—there is widespread and willing participation in the festival dancing, and the former quarrelling and fighting has virtually ceased. People comment that now an atmosphere of friendliness prevails in the village and that people have a better sense of membership in and responsibility to the community than before. Most villagers attribute this directly to the presence of the *lhawa* (1995:234).

The presence of the *lha pa* as the embodiment of a deity, especially during ritual activity, yields greater ritual integrity and village cohesion, as villagers see the *lha pa* as a palpable witness to their activity. Without the *lha pa*, the deity is more abstract, and as the purpose of ritual activity is to please deities, reasons for executing ritual performance accurately in the absence of *lha pa* are less tangible. Young *lha pa* often resent their role and continue to perform only under duress, with pressure to perform especially applied by elders. This raises the question: what might motivate the *lha pa* role to continue as elders pass away, and younger generations no longer share their beliefs? Also, with access to more food, medicine, education, better transportation, and information disseminated through radio and television, one also wonders how much longer *lha pa* will be needed? Will local people, for example, when bitten by a rabid wolf, ask a *lha pa* to shoot them, when they can easily visit a doctor?

Will people continue circumambulating fields to control insects, carrying heavy scriptures, when they have pesticides? And as general financial conditions have improved, will *lha pa* continue to exhaust themselves, cut and stab themselves, and so on, for a measure of grain or a small sum of money? Finally, if *lha pa* disappear, what will the motive be to continue ritual activity? What will relationships between villagers become?

During the 2007 Bod skor *klu rol*, the authors observed a group of European tourists who had each paid 200 RMB to photograph performances, as was required of them by the village. The Bod skor *lha pa*, while in trance, lined the tourists up before the shrine, offered each of them a *kha btags* and then spit a mouthful of liquor on them as a blessing. The visitors appeared to be quite delighted, and we had the impression they thought their money had been well spent. As word of *klu rol* spreads, tourism will likely increase, and will become increasingly a means of village revenue. Might tourism perpetuate this ritual performance? If so, how will this change the performance?

We assume that *klu rol* and *lha pa* will continue to change. It is difficult to make qualitative judgments of these changes, as many of them are due to a generally improved quality of life. In this text we have provided a portrait of the *lha pa* role as it existed and was thought of in and around Ha ra pA thur Village in 2008. If this text is reflected upon in 2018, cultural differences will be apparent and in 2108 the differences will be considerable. Therefore, this text stands as a contemporary record of the very unique and longstanding institution of the Reb gong *lha pa*, which is an endangered element of a vanishing culture.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX ONE:
HA RA PA THUR *BSANG* SCRIPTURE

This scripture was written by Rje ngag dbang chos ldan[448] and was recited daily in Ha ra pA thur by male villagers when burning *bsang* in 2008. It was also chanted when putting the *lha pa* into trance in 2007. 'Jigs med chos dbang nyi ma and 'Jigs med theg mchog asked certain Ha ra pA thur villagers to make woodblock prints of the scripture and give one complete copy to each family in 1992 or 1993.

Snying bo rgyal gave the following account of learning the scripture:

> I memorized the scripture by hearing other villagers recite it. Whenever villagers burn *bsang*, they recite the *bsang* scripture together, so I could hear what they were saying. At first, I only memorized names of some mountain deities mentioned in the scripture. When other villagers recited the part I had memorized, I recited it along with them. Gradually, I could recite almost all of the scripture, except for a few lines. I found the printed scripture at home one day, read it several times and corrected my mispronunciations and some lines that I had missed. After I read the scripture, I could recite it. If I ever missed words or lines, I corrected myself when we were reciting together. Now I can recite it fluently from memory without any problem.

[448] According to the endnote of this *bsang* scripture, his full name was Drang srong sems dpa' chen mo Rje ngag dbang chos ldan. He was born in Ha ra pA thur. The scripture was later edited by 'Jigs med chos dbang nyi ma.

བསང་མཆོད་བཞུགས་སོ།།

1. རོ་ཡི་ཁཊ། ཨོཾ་ཨཱཿཧཱུྃ། (ལན་གསུམ་བརྗོད།)
2. ཞེ་གསོལ་ལོ་མཆོད་དོ་རྒྱ་རྒྱུད་ཀྱི་བླ་མ་དམ་པ་རྣམས་དང་།
3. ཡི་དམ་རྒྱལ་བ་ཞི་བྱེ། རྒྱུད་སྡེ་བཞི་ཡི་ལྷ་ཚོགས།
4. སངས་རྒྱས་བྱང་ཆུབ་སེམས་དཔའ། ཉན་རང་འཕགས་པའི་དགེ་འདུན།
5. དཔའ་བོ་མཁའ་འགྲོ་ཆོས་སྐྱོང་སྲུང་མ།
6. བཀའ་སྡོད་དམ་ཅན་རྒྱ་མཚོའི་ཚོགས་དང་བཅས་པ་རྣམས་དང་།
7. ཞེ་ཤིད་པ་ཆགས་པའི་ལྷ་དགྱུ། ས་བདག་ས་ཡི་ལྷ་མོ།
8. བོད་སྐྱོང་བསྟན་མ་བཅུ་གཉིས་སྡོང་གསུམ་ཡུལ་ལྷ་གཞི་བདག
9. སྡོད་མངའ་རིས་སྐོར་གསུམ།
10. བར་དབུས་གཙང་རྟ་བཞི།
11. སྨད་མདོ་ཁམས་སྐང་དྲུག་ལ་གནས་པའི་ཞི་ལྷ་དཀར་ཐོ་ལྷ་ཡི་སྡེར་གཏོགས།
12. དབང་ལྷ་དམར་ཐོ་བཙན་གྱི་སྡེར་གཏོགས། དྲག་ལྷ་ནག་ཐོ་བདུད་ཀྱི་སྡེར་གཏོགས།
13. གང་འདོད་དངོས་གྲུབ་སྟོལ་བ་ཀླུ་ཡི་སྡེར་གཏོགས།
14. སྨྲ་ཚོགས་འཕྲིན་ལས་སྐྱབ་པ་གཟའ་ཡི་སྡེར་གཏོགས།
15. དགྲ་ཤ་ཟས་སུ་ཟ་བ་སྲིན་པའི་སྡེར་གཏོགས།
16. དགྲ་ལྷ་སྟོ་འབོག་གཏོང་བ་རྒྱལ་བའི་སྡེར་གཏོགས།
17. དགྲ་ཁྲག་སྐོམ་དུ་འཐུང་བ་མ་མའི་སྡེར་གཏོགས་སོགས་སྨད་སྲིད་ཀྱི་དེགས་པ་ལྷ་མ་སྲིན་སྡེ་བརྒྱད་འཚོང་དང་བཅས་བ་རྣམས་དང་།

18. ཞེ་མདོ་ཁམས་སྣང་ཀྱི་གང་ས་ཆེན་པོ་ལ་གནས་པའི་ས་བཅུའི་དབང་ཕྱུག་རྣམ་རྒྱལ་སྤོམ་ར།
19. ཡུམ་ཆེན་གོང་སྐན་ལྷ་དེ། སྲས་དང་སྲས་མོ་སྐུན་དགུ།
20. ཕྱོགས་བཞིའི་གཉན་ཆེན་སྡེ་བཞི།
21. མཆེད་འགོར་སུམ་བརྒྱ་དྲུག་ཅུ། རྩ་རིགས་སྟོང་དང་ལྔ་བརྒྱ།
22. ཞེ་ཉི་མ་ཤར་ཕྱོགས་ན་བཞུགས་པའི་དེགས་པའི་སྡེ་དགོན་ཆེན་པོ།
23. གཉན་ཆེན་སྤྱོ་ལ་གཡུ་རྩེ། ཡུམ་ཆེན་མ་མ་ལུ་གུ།
24. སྲས་མཆོག་མཐོ་རི་རྒྱལ་བོ། བཀྲ་ཤིས་ལྷ་བག་དཀར་པོ།
25. གོགས་བྱེད་མགོ་དཀར་མགོ་སྤྱོན། སྡོང་གོགས་ཟལ་དཀར་གཉན་པོ།
26. མཐུ་དཔུང་སྤོས་རི་རྒྱམ་པོ། དར་འཛོད་སྐྱེས་རི་མཐོན་པོ།
27. དམག་དཔོན་གཉན་བརྩེད་གོང་སྤྱོན།
28. དམག་མི་གཉན་དམག་སྐྱ་བརྒྱ་ཙོགས་འགོར་ཚོགས་ས་ཡ་འབུམ་སྡེ་དང་བཅས་བ་རྣམས་དང་།
29. ཞེ་དགེ་བཅུའི་ལང་ཚོ་རྒྱན་དུ་འཛིན་པའི་རེབ་ཀོང་གསེར་མོ་ལྕོངས་ཀྱི་དགུ་ཉིན་སྤིབ་ཕུ་མདོ་བར་གསུམ་ལ་གནས་པའི་ལྷ་སྐུ་གབོད་སྤྱིན་གནས་བདག་གཉེར་བདག ཡུལ་བདག་གོགས་བདག་སོགས་སྤྱི་དང་ཁྲད་པར་དུ་ས་བརྒྱད་པ་ཙོག་པའི་ཞ་ཆེས་བྱ་ཁྱུང་།
30. གྲགས་དཀར་སྐྱེན་གསུམ། ཇ་དམར་སྐྱེན་གསུམ།
31. སྐྱག་ལུང་ཀྱོ་མོ། སྐྱན་རི་མཐའ་སྤྱི།
32. བག་དཀར་རྟ་འཁྱིངས། ལྷ་རི་མཚོ་རྒན། ཞ་ཆེས་ཡེ་ཙོ།
33. ཞ་མ་གོང་མོ། རི་ལང་བཅུ་གཉིས། ལུ་རྟན་བཅུ་གཉིས།

34. གྲ་སྟེང་བཅུ་གཉིས། ཁུ་ཐོགས་བཅུ་གཉིས། རྒྱང་རྟ་སྟེ་བཞི།

35. དགྲ་ལྟ་བཅུ་གསུམ།

36. ཞེ་ཡང་སྒོས་སུ་རེབ་ཀོང་སྣྭད་ཀྱི་ཡུལ་སྡོངས།

37. རྒྱ་བོད་གཉིས་ཀྱི་ས་མཚམས། དགུ་ཚུ་སྡོན་མོའི་གཡས་རྒྱར།

38. རྩ་རི་སྐྱག་ཐོའི་ནང་ཤེད་ན་རིན་ཆེན་སྟ་ལྟ་ལས་གྲུབ་པའི་ཐོ་བྱང་གི་དབུས་སུ།

39. གདན་ཁྲི་ཕུན་སུམ་ཚོགས་པ་ལ་བཞུགས་སྐབས་སུ་ཆོ་འཕྲུལ་སྟ་ཚོགས་ཀྱིས་རོལ་བ།

40. མཐུ་རྩལ་ཐོགས་ལས་ཆེ་བ། རྩ་འཕྲུལ་གློག་ལས་སྐྱེ་བ།

41. ཉེས་ཅན་ཁྲིམས་ལ་འདེབས་པ། སྔོག་ཅན་ཚད་པས་གཅོད་པ།

42. བསྟེན་ན་སྐྱིང་ཉེ་བ། བཀུར་ན་ལུས་ཉེ་བ།

43. ཟད་ན་མཐུ་ཆེ་བ། བདེན་རྟུན་ལེགས་ཉེས་ཀྱི་ཤན་འབྱེད་པའི་དམག་དཔོན་རྡོ་རྗེ་དགྲ་འཇོམས།

44. ཞེ་ས་གཞི་མ་དལ་ན་བཞུགས་པའི་སྐྱེས་ལྟ་གཉན་པོ་དཔུང་ཡེ་ལང་།

45. ལྟ་གསོན་པོ། ཐུགས་ཀาདྲོན་པོ།

46. ཚ་སྐེས་སྟ་མའི་རིང་ནས་བསྟེན་ཅིང་བསྲུབས་པའི་སྡུང་མ་དྲག་རུལ་ཅན།

47. རིགས་སུ་བསྐྱེན་པའི་སྲས་དང་སྲས་མོ།

48. བཀའ་བཞིན་སྐྱབ་པའི་བཀའ་བློན་ཡང་བློན།

49. དགྲ་སྟེ་འཇོམས་པའི་ཕྱི་ཡི་དམག་དཔོན། དམག་ན་འདྲེན་པའི་རྒྱའཇོན་དང་འཇོན།

50. བང་མཇོད་སྐྱོང་བའི་ནང་གི་མཇོད་བདག གསོལ་ཁ་བ་དང་ཧ་འདྲེན་ཚང་འདྲེན།

51. ཕྱག་བདར་བ་དང་རྟ་འཛིན་མཛོ་འཛིན།
52. ཁོ་ན་ལས་མ་ཐན་བྱན་དང་མངག་གཞུག་སྨུལ་བ་ཡང་སྨུལ་གྱི་དམག་ཚོགས་བར་སྣང་གི་ཆြེན་གང་བ་ཞེད་རྣམས་ལ་སྐྱ་གཟིག་དོམ་དེལ་གྱི་སྐྱན་གཟིགས།
53. མདལ་མཚོན་གོ་ཁབ་ཀྱི་རྟེན་རྫས། སྐྱ་སྐྱན་རྩམ་བརྡིད་ཀྱི་རོལ་མོ།
54. སྲབ་འཛམ་ལྷ་རྫས་ཀྱི་སྐྱན་ཤལ། གསེར་ལོ་འབར་བའི་སྐྱ་བ།
55. གཡུ་ལོ་འབར་བའི་ཤུག་བ། དུང་ལོ་འབར་བའི་བ་ལུ།
56. དམ་རྫས་བརྒྱན་གྱི་གཏོར་མ། དཀར་གསུམ་འོ་མའི་རྒྱ་མཚོ།
57. མངར་གསུམ་ཟས་ཀྱི་སྐྱིང་བོ། བཅུད་ལྡན་ཤ་ཡི་བཟའ་བ།
58. ཧ་ཚང་ཁྲག་གི་བཏུང་བ། དྲི་ཞིམ་བསངས་ཀྱི་མཆོད་པ།
59. བཟང་བྱུག་སྨན་གྱི་རིལ་བུ་དང་བཅས་སྦུགས་དང་ཉིང་འཛིན་ཕྱག་རྒྱས་བྱིན་གྱིས་བརླབས་པ་གྲུས་བའི་ཕྱལ་ཉེ།
60. འཕྲིན་ལས་གཅན་པོ་གཉེར་བྱ་ཐུབ་པ་ནི།
61. ལྷང་དང་རྐྱེགས་པའི་བདག་ཉིད་སངས་རྒྱས་ཀྱི་བསྟན་པ་སྐྱོང་ཤིག
62. མཁས་བཙུན་བཟང་གསུམ་འཛོམས་པའི་བསྟན་འཛིན་གྱི་སྐུ་ཚེ་སྲུངས་ཤིག
63. བཤད་དང་སྨྲབ་པའི་སྒོལ་འཛིན་དགེ་འདུན་གྱི་འདུས་སྡེ་སྐྱོངས་ཤིག
64. ཉིང་འཛིན་རིགས་སྔགས་འཚང་བའི་རྣལ་འབྱོར་བའི་འཕྲིན་ལས་སྒྲུབས་ཤིག
65. མཁའ་ཁམས་སེམས་ཅན་ཡོངས་ཀྱི་འཕྲལ་ཡུན་གྱི་བདེ་སྐྱིད་སྒེལ་ཅིག
66. ཁྱད་པར་དུ་སྡེ་གཞི་མི་རིགས་འདི་ལ་སྔང་བར་བྱེད་པའི་གཟུགས་ཅན་གྱི་དགྲ་བོ།
67. གནོད་པར་བྱེད་པའི་གཟུགས་མེད་ཀྱི་བགེགས་ཚོགས།
68. བར་དུ་གཅོད་པའི་ཕྱི་ནང་གི་འགལ་རྐྱེན། ཆེ་སྟི་ཆུང་སྟི།

69. ནད་རིམས་གདོན་གེགས། བྱད་ཕྲུད་ཅོད་གཏོང་།
70. དག་རྒག་ཆོམ་ཀུན། སྐེང་ལོག་ཤ་འགེལ།
71. མི་ཁ་བྱམ་མཆུ། ཐྲབ་ཚོད་འཁྲན་སེམས།
72. དག་སྣ་གྱོད་སྣ་སོགས་མི་འདོད་བའི་འགལ་ཀྱེན་ཐམས་ཅད་དག་བའི་ལས་ཀྱིས་ཐལ་བའི་རྟུལ་ཐྲན་བཞིན་དུ་བརླག་པའི་འཕྲིན་ལས་མཛོད་ལ།
73. མཐུན་པའི་ཀྱེན་དུ་གྱུར་བའི་ཚེ་དང་བསོད་ནམས།
74. དཔལ་དང་འབྱོར་བ། ཁ་རྟེས་དབང་ཐང་།
75. ལོངས་སྤྱོད་རིགས་རྒྱུད་སོགས་རྒྱས་པའི་གྲོགས་དན་མཛོད་ཅིག
76. ཞེ་སྡང་བའི་དར་ཕྱོར། གྲགས་པའི་དྲུང་བུས།
77. འདོད་པའི་དོན་སྒྲུབས། བཅོལ་བའི་ལས་སྒྲུབས།
78. རང་གི་བྱ་ཕྱའི་ཁ་འཛིན་མཛོད་ལ་རྒྱང་རྟ་ཡར་ལ་སྐྱེད་ཅིག
79. ཉམས་པ་སོས། ཚད་པ་འཕྱད།
80. འགྱེད་པ་ལོངས། མི་ལ་ན་ཚ་མ་གཏོང་། ཕྱུགས་ལ་གོད་ཁ་མ་གཏོང་།
81. ཐར་འགྲོའི་སྐྱེལ་མ་མཛོད། ཚུར་འོང་གི་བསུ་མ་མཛོད།
82. ཉིན་གྱི་བྱ་ར་མཛོད། མཚན་གྱི་མེལ་ཚེ་མཛོད།
83. མདོར་ན་དཔལ་ལྡན་བླ་མའི་བཀའ་ལས་མི་འདའ་བར་བདག་ཅག་རྣམས་ལ་ལུས་དང་གྲིབ་མ་བཞིན་དུ་འགྲོགས་ལ། ཞི་རྒྱས་དབང་དྲག་གི་ལས་གང་བཅོལ་ཐམས་ཅད་ཐོགས་པ་མེད་པར་མྱུར་དུ་སྒྲུབ་པའི་འཕྲིན་ལས་ཀྱི་སྟོང་གྲོགས་རྒྱ་ཆེན་པོ་མཛོད་ཅིག།

TRANSLATION:
BSANG SCRIPTURE

1. *RaM yaM khaM*,[449] *oM AH hUM*, (say it three times).
2. *Ae*! Praying and offering to all sublime lineage lamas,
3. Tutelary deities: Victorious One,[450] peaceful and wrathful ones,[451] deities of the four tantric classes,[452]
4. Enlightened One, Bodhisattva, the monastic communities of noble listeners and solitary sages,[453]
5. Heroes,[454] sky goers,[455] Dharma protectors and guardians,
6. *Bka' sdod*[456] and vow-holders,[457] all.
7. *Ae*! The nine deities who created existence,[458] landlords, earth goddess,[459]

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[449] Mkha' byams rgyal suggested that these three syllables *raM* 'fire,' *yaM* 'wind' and *khaM* 'water' were chanted to purify offerings.

[450] 'Conqueror,' 'victorious one,' describing Buddha who conquered the four *bdud*: Phung po bdud 'Demon of the Aggregates,' Nyon mongs pa'i bdud 'Demon of Emotional Disturbances,' 'Chi bdag gi bdud 'Demon of the Lord of Death' and Lha'i bu'i bdud 'Demon of the Godly Son' (Thob. nd.).

[451] *Zhi khro*.

[452] *Rgyud sde bzhi yi lha tshogs* refers to the deities of the four divisions of Tantra. The four divisions of Tantra are: *bya rgyud*; *spyod rgyud*; *rnal 'byor rgyud*; *bla med rnal 'byor rgyud* (Thob. nd.).

[453] *Nyan rang 'phags pa'i dge 'dun*.

[454] *Dpa' bo* '(spiritual) hero' (Thob. nd.).

[455] *Mkha' 'gro*.

[456] A Dharma protector who takes orders (Thob. nd.).

[457] *Dam can*, name of the Dharma protector who vows to protect Buddhist doctrine (Thob. nd.).

[458] They are: Yab 'Od de gung rgyal, Yar lung gi Yar lha sham po, Byang gi Gnyan chen thang lha, Rgad stod kyi Jo bo 'gyog chen, Shar gyi Rma chen spom ra, Jo bo g.yu rgyal, She'u mkha' ri, Skyid shod Zhog lha

8. The twelve *brtan ma* protecting Tibet,[460] local deities and mountain deities of the 3,000 fold universes.
11. The white peaceful deities, *lha*,[461]
12. The red powerful deities, *btsan*, the black wrathful deities, *bdud*,

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phyug po and Gang ba bzang po (Nebesky-Wojkowitz, 1996:209).

[459] Earth goddess Rab brtan ma (Nebesky-Wojkowitz, 1996:294).

[460] They are: Rdo rje kun grags ma, Rdo rje g.ya' ma skyong, Rdo rje kun tu bzang (Rdo rje kun tu grags or Rdo rje kun tu bzang ma), Rdo rje bgegs kyi gtso, Rdo rje spyan gcig ma (Rdo rje g·yu bun ma), Rdo rje dpal gyi yum (Rdo rje glang mo che, Rdo rje khyung btsun ma), Rdo rje klu mo, Rdo rje grags mo rgyal (Rdo rje drag mo rgyal or Rdo rje grags rgyal ma), Rdo rje bod khams skyong (Bod khams skyong or Rdo rje dpal mo che), Rdo rje sman gtsig (gcig) ma, Rdo rje g.ya' mo bsil (Sman btsun chen mo rdo rje g.ya' ma skyong, Rdo rje g.ya' ma bsil or Rdo rje dbyar mo bsil, Rdo rje g.ya' mo sil) and Rdo rje g.yu sgron ma (Rdo rje zu le ma, Rdo rje gzugs legs ma or Rdo rje dril bu gzugs legs ma, Rdo rje zu le sman) (Dung dkar blo bzang 'phrin las, 2002:1,026).

[461] *Lha*, *btsan*, *bdud*, *naga*, *gza'*, *srin po*, *rgyal bo* and *ma mo* are Lha srin sde brgyad or 'Eight Haughty Classes of Deities and Demons.' "There are various descriptions but in the sutras the most general is: *devas*, *nagas*, *yakshas*, *gandharvas*, *asuras*, *garudas*, *kinnaras*, and *mahoragas*. All of them were able to receive and practice the teachings of the Buddha. These eight classes can also refer to various types of mundane spirits who can cause either help or harm, but remain invisible to normal human beings: *ging*, *mara*, *tsen*, *yaksha*, *raksha*, *mamo*, *rahula*, and *naga*. On a subtle level, they are regarded as the impure manifestation of the eight types of consciousness" (Thob. nd.).

13. The class of *klu* bestowing whatever attainments are desired,
14. The class of *gza'* establishing myriad abundance,
15. The class of *srin po* eating enemy flesh as food,
16. The class of *rgyal bo* making enemies insane,
17. The class of *ma mo* drinking enemy blood, the attendants of universes eight haughty classes of deities, demons and others,

9. Dwelling in the three Mnga' ris districts[462] in upper Tibet,
10. The four Dbus gtsang divisions[463] in central Tibet,
11. And the six Mdo khams[464] ranges[465] in lower Tibet.

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[462] The first district being Spu hreng, Mang yul and Zangs dkar; the second, Zhang zhung, upper Khri te and lower Khri te and the third 'Chim mam li, Bru sha and Sbal ti (Dung dkar blo bzang 'phrin las 2002:1014).

[463] During king Srong btsan sgam po's reign, Dbus [Lha sa], was divided in two parts: Dbu ru and G.yo ru. Gtsang [Lho kha] was divided into three parts: G.yas ru, Ru lag and Yan lag Sum pa'i ru. Then, during the seventeenth century, the five divisions became four: G.yas ru, G.yon ru, Dbus ru and Gung ru (Dung dkar blo bzang 'phrin la, 2002:1537).

[464] A toponym used historically to refer to A mdo and Khams.

[465] They are "Zal mo sgang, Tsha ba sgang, Smar khams sgang, Spo 'bor sgang, Dmar rdza sgang and Mi nyag rab sgang. The area from 'Bri chu to the northern side of Nyag chu is the Zal mo Range, the area between Rgyal mo rngul chu and Rdza chu is the Tsha ba Range, the area from Rdza chu to the northern side of 'Bri chu is the Smar khams Range, the area from 'Bri chu to the southern side of Nyag chu is the Spo 'bor Range, the area from the southern side of Rma chu in Mtsho sngon Province to the east, in the upper part of Nyag chu is the Dmar rdza Range, on the eastern side and in the central part of Nyag chu is the Mi nyag rab Range" (Thob. nd.).

18. *Ae*, Rma rgyal spom ra[466] residing in the great snow mountain of Lower Mdo khams,[467] the master of the tenth stage,[468]
19. Supreme mother[469] Gong sman lha ri,[470] the nine princes and princesses,[471]
20. The four orders of great *gnyan* of the four directions,[472]
21. The retinue of 360 (brothers), 1,500 descendents of *rma*.[473]

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[466] Also named Spom chen spom ra, 'Brog gnas rma rgyal spom che and 'Brog gnas lha yi dge bsnyen (Nebesky-Wojkowitz, 1996:209). Rma rgyal spom ra dwelt on Rma chen Mountain, Rma chu County, Mgo log Prefecture.

[467] Mdo khams smad.

[468] The ten Bodhisattva stages/ levels: 1) *rab tu dga' ba*, 2) *dri ma med pa*, 3) *'od byed pa*, 4) *'od 'phro ba*, 5) *sbyang dka' ba*, 6) *mngon du gyur ba*, 7) *ring du song ba*, 8) *mi g.yo ba*, 9) *legs pa'i blo gros* and 10) *chos kyi sprin*. These are stages to Buddhahood (Thob. nd.). Rma rgyal spom ra reached the tenth stage, thus he is one of the highest and most powerful mountain deities in Tibet.

[469] Yum chen was an honorific term for deities' wives. We thank John Vincent Bellezza for the following: "In an older cultural context *yum chen* goddesses are sovereign queens."

[470] She was believed to be Rma rgyal spom ra's wife. "[She] carries a vessel full of *amrta*, a mirror, and rides on a stag" (Nebesky-Wojkowitz, 1996:211).

[471] "[Rma chen spom ra's] nine sons, who wear amour, brandish weapons, and ride on horses, and his nine daughters; the later ride on cuckoos" (Nebesky-Wojkowitz, 1996:211).

[472] Rma rgyal spom ra of the east, Dbyi rgyal dmag dpon of the south, Gnyan chen thang lha of the west and the Skyog chen sdang ra (or Sgyog chen gdong ra) of the north as a group are named Gnyan chen sde bzhi (Nebesky-Wojkowitz, 1996:213).

22. *Ae*! The great lord of classes of the haughty ones[474] dwelling in the direction of sunrise,
23. The great *gnyan*, Sngo la g.yu rtse;[475] the supreme mother, Ma ma lu gu,[476]

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[473] Rma chen spom ra. Several *bsang* scriptures mention *rma rigs sum brgya drug cu* or '360 descendents of *rma*' and *rma 'khor stong dang lnga brgya*' or '*rma*'s retinue of 1,500.' This scripture says *rma rigs stong dang lnga brgya* or '1,500 descendents of *rma*.' This is probably due to confusion between the literary definition of *rma rigs* 'rma lineage' and *rma 'khor*, 'rma retinue.' "*rMa chen spom ra* is believed to be accompanied by a train of three hundred sixty brother-deities, shortly called the three hundred sixty *rma*, which would suggest that the *rma* are perhaps a separate group of ancient local gods" (Nebesky-Wojkowitz, 1996:210).

[474] "The group of protectors and guardian deities, which comprises some of the best-known gods and goddesses of the Tibetan Buddhist pantheon, is considered to be divided into two main branches: firstly the powerful, high-ranking deities, known as the *'jig rten las 'das pa'i srung ma*, i.e. the gods and goddesses who have passed beyond the six spheres of existence; to this group belong 'all the protective deities of the eighth, ninth and tenth rank.' …Secondly those deities who are still residing within the sphere inhabited by animated beings and taking an active part in the religious life of Tibet, most of them assuming from time to time possession of mediums who act then as their mouthpieces. These gods and goddesses, known as the *'jig rten pa'i srung ma* or *'jig rten las ma 'das pa'i srung ma*, are also frequently called *dregs pa* 'the haughty ones,' an expression derived from the fact that most of the deities of this class are depicted with a haughty-fierce facial expression" (Nebesky-Wojkowitz, 1996:3-4).

24. The great prince, Mtho ri rgyal bo,[477] the auspicious, Lha brag dkar po,
25. The supporter, Mgo dkar, (and) Mgo sngon, the helper, Zal dkar gnyan po,
26. The forceful troops, Spos ri zlum po, the flag holder, Skyes ri mthon po,[478]
27. The general, Gnyan brjid gong sngon,[479]

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[475] "…a peak lying to the east of the Amne Machen, is the *sNgo la g.yu rtse*, addressed by his full name as *'brog gnas kyi sde dpon chen po gnyan rje sNgo la g.yu rtse*, '*Sngo la g.yu rtse*, lord of the *gnyan*-demons, great commander of the spirits who dwell in solitude.' Other names by which he is known are *lha gnyan chen po sNgo la g.yu rtse*, *Dregs pa'i lha gnyan mthu bo che*, and *sNang srid sde brgyad tshogs kyi rje dpon* (Nebesky-Wojkowitz, 1996:213).

[476] Yum chen (Supreme Mother) Ma ma lu gu, Gnyan Ma ma le gu or Yum chen Ma ma lag dgu was Gnyan rje Sngo la g.yu rtse's wife. "She is of a brilliant white color, has a beautiful appearance, and her attributes are a *mda' dar* and a flat bowl full of jewels. She rides a hind" (Nebesky-Wojkowitz, 1996:214).

[477] Sras mchog (Great Prince) Mtho ri rgyal bo or Gnyan sras (*gnyan* Prince) Mtho ri rgyal bo was Gnyan rje Sngo la g.yu rtse's son. "His body is pale-red, he brandishes a lance, a snare, and rides on a blue dragon of turquoise" (Nebesky-Wojkowitz, 1996:213).

[478] "…a number of local deities, who apparently are the personifications of mountains: *bKra shis lha brag dkar po*, *Grogs byed mgo dkar mgo sngon*, *sDong grogs zhal dkar gnyan po*, *mThu dpung spos ri zlum po*, *Dar 'dzin skyes ri mthon po*, *and dMag bskul gnyan rje gong sngon*" (Nebesky-Wojkowitz, 1996:214). The two syllables before their names are associated with their roles.

[479] "[He] is another local deity of Amdo (*A mdo*) …also known as the *dregs pa'i mnga' bdag gNyan rje gung*

28. The army, wrathful soldiers, hundreds of troops and classes of countless attendants.
29. *Ae*! Reb kong,[480] the land of gold, possessing ten virtues,[481]
29. Dwelling in the sunny and shady sides, the upper, middle and lower parts of *dgu*,[482] generally, deities, water deities,[483] harm bringers,[484] regional deities,[485] treasure lords,[486] local deities[487] and *grogs bdag*,[488]
29. Particularly, A myes Bya khyung,[489] who reached the eighth stage,[490]
30. The three Grags dkar brothers, the three Rdza dmar brothers,[491]

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sngon or *Yul gyi lha gnyan chen po*" (Nebesky-Wojkowitz, 1996:215).

[480] This spelling differs from the spelling we have used throughout the paper, but remains true to the Tibetan original.

[481] *Yul gyi dge bcu* 'ten virtues of an area' or *sa'i dge bcu* 'ten virtues of a land:' land for 1) housing and 2) cultivation, water for 3) drinking and 4) irrigation, grass both 5) near and 6) far, wood for 7) housing and 8) fuel, stone for 9) housing and 10) stoves.

[482] The main valley of Reb gong.

[483] *Klu*.

[484] *Gnod sbyin*.

[485] *Gnas bdag*.

[486] *Gter bdag*.

[487] *Yul bdag*.

[488] This may be a misspelling of *grong bdag* 'village lords.'

[489] A myes Bya khyung was considered by Reb gong residents to be the highest and most powerful deity in Reb gong and was venerated by many villages in 2008.

[490] Also referring to the ten Bodhisattva stages as in line eighteen.

[491] Rdza dmar Mountain is located seventeen kilometers northwest of the 'Do ba Township govenment offices. It is 4,185 meters tall (Tongren xianzhi bianzuan

31. Stag lung and Gyo mo,[492] Sman ri[493] and Mtha' smig,[494]
32. Brag dkar[495] and Rta 'gyings,[496] Lha ri[497] and Mtsho rgan,[498] A myes Ye mtho,
33. A ma Gong mo,[499] the twelve Ri lang, the twelve Pu hran,[500]
34. The twelve Gya steng,[501] the twelve Khu thogs, the four wind horse members,[502]

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weiyuanhui, 2001:106). No further information on these brothers was found.

[492] A myes Stag lung Mountain is southeast and A ma Gyo mo Mountain is east of Rong bo. Villagers residing near these mountains venerated A myes Stag lung and A ma Gyo mo. They considered them a couple.

[493] A myes Sman ri Mountain is 17.5 kilometers southwest of Mgar rtse Township government offices. It is 4,093 meters tall (Tongren xianzhi bianzuan weiyuanhui, 2001:104). This is the mountain where A myes Sman ri dwelt.

[494] Probably referring to Mtha' smug Mountain, south of Rong bo.

[495] This deity was venerated in Ha ra pA thur. A lamb was sacrificed to Brag dkar until 1958.

[496] Referring to Rta 'gyings Mountain, southwest of Ha ra pA thur.

[497] "He inhabits a mountain approximately half a kilometer from the village [Gling rgya Village] …he is both gentle and violent, depending on circumstances, and he rides a white horse" (Dpal ldan bkra shis and Stuart, 1998:35).

[498] This deity was venerated by 'Jam villagers.

[499] A ma Gong mo Mountain is northeast of Ha ra pA thur. Ha ra pA thur villagers believed that A ma Gong mo dwelt there.

[500] A myes Pu hran was venerated in Gling rgya in 2008.

[501] A deity named A myes Gya steng was venerated in Sdong skam and Rdzong nangs villages. Shrines for these deities existed in these villages. No further

35. The thirteen warrior deities.[503]
36. *Ae*! Especially, in lower Reb kong,
37. At the border of China and Tibet, on the right side of the blue Dgu chu,
38. In the center of the palace, built with five precious things,[504] inside the dark-brown rocky mountain,
39. Seated on the grand throne, with manifold magic powers,
40. More powerful than a thunderbolt, magic swifter than lightning,
41. Punishing criminals, punishing evildoers,
42. If venerated, closer to the heart, if esteemed, closer to the height of (your)[505] career,
43. Once beseeched (you are) empowered, Dmag dpon rdo rje dgra 'joms,[506] who discerns true and false, good and evil.
44. *Ae*! Dpung ye ri lang,[507] the powerful and wrathful natal deity dwelling on the peaceful land,
45. A living deity, warm-hearted,
46. The wrathful guardian venerated and worshiped since the time of the earliest ancestors,
47. Princes and princesses of (the deity's) lineage,

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information was found on this deity group or the Khu thogs group.

[502] *Rlung rta sde bzhi*, considered to be *sa bdag* kings, wood-tiger, fire-snake, iron-ape and water-pig (Berounsky, 2004).

[503] *Dgra lha bcu gsum*.

[504] "Gold, silver, turquoise, coral and pearl" (Thob. nd.). Gold, silver, copper, coral and pearl; gold, silver, copper, iron and aluminum (Dung dkar blo bzang 'phrin las, 2002:1,912).

[505] Referring to the deity.

[506] 'Vajra General Subduing Enemies,' A myes Ba rdzong.

[507] This spelling differs from the spelling we have used throughout the paper, but remains true to the Tibetan original.

48. Ministers and ministers of ministers, fulfilling (the deity's) command,
49. Minister of external affairs crushing enemy forces, troop leader and flagman,
50. The lord of treasure keepers, the host, tea servers, liquor servers,
51. Sweeper, horse keeper, *mdzo*[508] keeper,
52. Messengers, officers, serfs, attendants, legions of emanations and emanations of emanations filling the sky, ground and space, for all of you. Ritual offerings[509] including tigers, leopards, bears and brown bears,[510]
53. Ritual objects[511] including weapons (arrows) and armor, awe-inspiring music,
54. Ear lobes[512] of thin and soft sacrificial scarves, birches with bright golden leaves,
55. Juniper with bright turquoise leaves, azalea with bright conch-colored leaves,
56. Sacrificial cakes[513] adorned with sacred ingredients, milky ocean of the three white things,[514]

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[508] Cross between a yak bull and a cow.

[509] *Spyan gzigs*, all the offerings placed on an altar in a monastery or temple.

[510] *Dred*.

[511] *Rten rdzas*.

[512] *Snyan shal*.

[513] *Gtor ma* refers to "Cones made of roasted barley mixed with butter, colored and decorated in different ways according to the type of deity to which they are addressed" (Thob. nd.). There are two types of *gtor ma*: *dkar gtor* 'white *gtor ma*,' smeared with melted butter offered to peaceful deities such as Sgrol ma and *dmar gtor* 'red *gtor ma*,' smeared with purple-red dye called *'bri smug* or *smug rtsi*, offered to wrathful deities such as Dharma protectors (Dung dkar blo bzang 'phrin las, 2002:974).

[514] Curds, milk and butter (Dung dkar blo bzang 'phrin las, 2002:140).

57. The three sweet things,[515] the finest foods, food: nutritious meat,
58. Drinks: tea, liquor and blood, fragrant *bsang* offerings
59. And medicinal pills mixed with the six precious substances,[516] respectfully offered after their consecration through Mantra, meditation and mudra.
60. Entrusted with serious affairs:
61. Protect the doctrine of statement and realization,[517]
62. Defend learned, disciplined and noble doctrine-holder's lives,
63. Sustain the monastic community adhering to teachings and practice,
64. Fulfill the affairs of yogis practicing meditation and Mantra recitation,
65. Increase the temporary and prominent happiness of all beings, limitless as space.
66. Particularly, visible enemies, hostile to our people,
67. Mass of harmful invisible obstructive spirits,[518]
68. Inner and outer obstructions, *che sri*[519] and *chung sri*,[520]
69. Epidemics, malevolent spirits,[521] black magic[522] and curses,[523]
70. Enemies, bandits, thieves, accusation[524] and *sha 'gel*,[525]

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[515] Molasses, honey and sugar (Dung dkar blo bzang 'phrin las, 2002:760).

[516] "*Cu/chu gang* 'bamboo pitch,' *gur gum* 'saffron,' *li shi* 'clove,' *dza ti* 'nutmeg,' *sug smel* 'cardamom,' *ka ko la*, 'cubeb'" (Thob. nd.).

[517] *Lung dang rtogs pa'i bstan pa*.

[518] *Bgegs*.

[519] "Malignant spirits attacking adults" (Nebesky-Wojkowitz, 1996:216).

[520] Spirits who kill children (Nebesky-Wojkowitz, 1996:216).

[521] *Gdon gegs*.

[522] *Byad phud*, probably a misspelling of *byad phur*.

[523] *Rbod gtong*.

[524] *Gleng log*.

71. Gossip and *bram mchu*,[526] bullying and jealousy,
72. Hostility and dispute, all unwanted obstructions shall be annihilated to dust by performing wrathful activities.
73. Help favorable conditions such as longevity and merit,
74. Glory and luxury, fortune and influence,
75. Wealth and offspring to flourish.
76. *Ae*! Lift the flag of fame, blow the conch of reputation,
77. Fulfill wishes, complete commissioned assignments,
78. Aid (us) as your sons, increase luck,
79. Restore order, rejoin broken ends,
80. Regain (our) footing, do not bring sickness to people or loss of livestock,
81. Escort those who depart, welcome those who return,
82. Keep (us) safe day and night.
83. In short, not exceeding the instructions of the glorious lama, accompany all of us like a body and its shadow,
83. Help (us) immediately complete whatever we ask, without obstruction, of pacifying, enriching, magnetizing and subjugating.[527]

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[525] This is likely a misspelling. If spelled *sha 'gal*, it may be translated 'flesh feud' or 'vendetta' (Thob. nd.).

[526] We were unable to translate this term. When Ha ra pA thur villagers curse others they suggested this be eaten by the cursed person.

[527] 'Pacifying illness' and 'the harm of evil spirits;' 'enriching life, merit and wealth;' 'magnetizing human and nonhuman;' 'subjugating enemies' (Dung dkar blo bzang 'phrin las, 2002:1768).

APPENDIX TWO:
DKAR RTSE GDONG *BSANG* SCRIPTURE

The *bsang* scripture of A myes Ba rdzong recited by male Dkar rtse gdong villagers while burning *bsang* and putting *lha pa* into trance in 2008.

བ་ཙོང་བསང་མཆོད་བཞུགས་སོ།།

1. ཨཱཿཀཱི།། ལྷ་ཆེན་ཡུལ་ལྷ་གཉན་ཏོ་ཁྲོད།།
2. ཤར་ཕྱོགས་རྒྱ་ནག་ཁོ་བྱང་དུ།།
3. གོང་མ་རྒྱལ་བའི་སྤྱན་སྔ་སྟ།།
4. བོད་དུ་བྱོན་པར་ཁས་བླངས་པས།།
5. རེབ་གོང་ཡུལ་འདི་གཉེར་དུ་གཏད།།
6. སྤྱན་སྔར་ཁས་བླངས་དམ་བཅོས་པའི།།
7. མཚན་ནི་བ་ཙོང་རི་ལང་བརྩོད།།
8. ཁྱེད་ཀྱི་སྐུ་ཡི་ཚ་ལུགས་ནི།།
9. ཅིབས་སུ་རྟ་དཀར་གཡུ་རྩོག་བཅིབས།།
10. གོས་སུ་གསེར་ཁྲབ་སེར་བོ་གྱོན།།
11. ཟས་སུ་ཤ་དང་ཁྲག་ལ་དགའ།།
12. དབུ་ལ་གསེར་ཀྱི་རྩེག་ཞུ་མནའས།།
13. དཔུལ་བར་ཤེལ་ཀྱི་མེ་ལོང་མཛེས།།
14. ཞལ་གཅིག་ཕྱག་གཉིས་སྤྱན་གསུམ་ལྡན།།
15. ཕྱག་གཡས་མཆོད་ཆ་རྩེན་པོ་ཐོགས།།
16. ཕྱག་གཡོན་རྟ་མཆོག་སྦྲབ་མདའ་འཛིན།།
17. འཁོར་དུ་དམག་མི་བསམ་མི་ཁྱབ།།

18. རྣམ་འགྱུར་སྟེ་ཚོགས་སྟོན་མཛད་པའི།།
19. དམག་དཔོན་བ་ཙོང་འཁོར་བཅས་བསྟོད།།
20. ཀྱི། ལྷ་སྲིན་སྡེ་བརྒྱད་འབངས་སུ་ཞྱེད།།
21. གཅན་གཟན་རི་དྭགས་རྣེས་སུ་འབྲངས།།
22. འཁོར་བཅས་དེ་རིང་གནས་འདིར་བྱོན།།
23. མཐུན་པའི་གནས་འདིར་བརྟན་པར་བཞུགས།།
24. ཞྭེད་ལ་མཆོད་པའི་བྱ་བག་ནི།།
25. ཤ་ཁྲག་སྦྱན་གཟེགས་རི་ལྟར་སྤྲངས།།
26. ཇ་ཟུད་ཆང་ཟུད་མཆོ་ལྟར་འཁྱིལ།།
27. རྟ་དང་གླིང་བུ་འབྲུག་ལྟར་སྦོགས།།
28. དེ་ཞེམ་དུད་པ་སྤྲིན་ལྟར་གཏེའམ།།
29. བསང་ངོ་དམག་དཔོན་འཁོར་བཅས་བསངས།།
30. མཆོད་ངོ་དམག་དཔོན་འཁོར་བཅས་མཆོད།།
31. བརྟན་ནོ་དམག་དཔོན་འཁོར་བཅས་བརྟན།།
32. ཚ་མྱེས་བརྒྱད་པའི་སྡུང་མ་ཁྱོད།།
33. དགའ་ན་ཁ་འཛོན་རྒྱབ་རྟེན་མཛོད།།
34. ཁྲོས་ན་ཆོ་འཕྲུལ་དུ་མ་སྟོན།།
35. བོས་ན་ནམ་མཁའི་གློག་བཞིན་སྐྱེ།།
36. ཟད་ན་དགྲ་བཅོམས་ཆེམས་ལ་འབེབས།།
37. དགྲ་དང་བཅོམས་ཚོགས་དཔུང་བ་ཆོག།
38. ཁྱད་པར་སྐྱང་མ་མཐུ་རུལ་ཅན།།

39. ཞེད་ལ་བསངས་མཆོད་འབུལ་བ་ནི།།

40. བདག་ཅག་དཔོན་སློབ་འགོར་བཅས་ཀྱི།།

41. ལས་དང་བྱ་བ་ཅི་བྱས་ཀྱང་།།

42. ཀོ་ལོང་ཕྱག་དོག་མ་མཛད་པར།།

43. མཐུན་ཏྲེན་ཡིད་བཞིན་འགྲུབ་པར་མཛོད།།

44. མི་ཡི་ན་ཚ་ཞྲོད་ཀྱིས་བཟློག།

45. ཕྱུགས་ཀྱི་གོད་ཁ་ཞྲོད་ཀྱིས་བཟློག།

46. ཁ་འཛིན་རྒྱབ་རྟེན་ཞྲོད་ཀྱིས་མཛོད།།

47. མདོར་ན་གང་བཅོལ་ལས་རྣམས་བསྒྲུབས།།

48. བཅོལ་བའི་འཕྲིན་ལས་སྒྲུབ་པར་མཛོད།།

49. སོོ་སོོ་ཆེའོ་ལྟ་རྒྱལ་ལོ།།

50. སཏྱ་མཉྩ་ལཱི།།

TRANSLATION:
BA TSONG[528] *BSANG* SCRIPTURE

1. *Kye*! You, the great wrathful local deity,
2. In the Chinese palace in the east,
3. In the presence of the emperor,
4. Because (you) promised to come to Tibet,
5. (You) were charged with the Reb gong area,
6. (Upon your) vow in the presence of (the emperor),
7. (You) were addressed as Ba tsong ri lang.
8. Your physical attributes are (such that):
9. (You) mount a white horse with a turquoise mane,
10. (You) put on yellow armor of gold,
11. (You) prefer flesh and blood,
12. (You) wear a helmet of gold,
13. (You) bear a crystal mirror on (your) forehead,[529]
14. (You) have a face, two arms and three eyes,
15. (You) grasp a sharp weapon in (your) right hand,
16. (You) grasp the rein of a supreme steed in (your) left hand,
17. (You) command an assembly of countless soldiers,
18. Who manifest various moods,
19. Praise General Ba tsong with the retinue.
20. *Kye*! Leading the entourage of the eight classes of deities and demons,
21. Followed by wild animals,
22. (You), along with (your) retinue, will arrive here today,
23. (You) will reside forever in this land of harmony.
24. Namely, the sacrifices you are offered are:
25. Flesh and blood piled as high as mountains,
26. Tea and liquor offerings abounding like oceans,
27. Drums and flutes sounding like dragons,
28. Fragrant smoke shrouds like clouds.
29. Cleanse! Cleanse the general along with his retinue,

---

[528] This spelling of Ba rdzong is consistent with the original Tibetan.

[529] The three main deity statues in the Ha ra pA thur *dmag dpon* have mirrors on their chests and foreheads.

30. Offer! Offer the general along with his retinue,
31. Reward! Reward the general along with his retinue.
32. You, the guardian since (the time of our) ancestors,
33. When happy, give assistance and support,
34. When enraged, display magic,
35. When beseeched, be quick as lightning in the sky,
36. When entrusted, demolish enemies and obstruction,
37. Annihilate enemies and obstacles.
38. 39. (We) make *bsang* offerings especially to you, the mighty guardian for
40. 41. Whatever affairs and matters the master and all disciples undertake,
42. Instead of being hindered by acts of jealousy,
43. (We) will be favored as (we) prayed for,
44. You, repel the sickness of people,
45. You, repel the loss of livestock,
46. You, give assistance and support.
47. In brief, whatever (you) are entrusted with shall be taken care of,
48. Things entrusted to (you) shall be taken care of,
49. *SooM sooM che'o*![530] Victorious are the deities!
50. *Sarba mangga laM*![531]

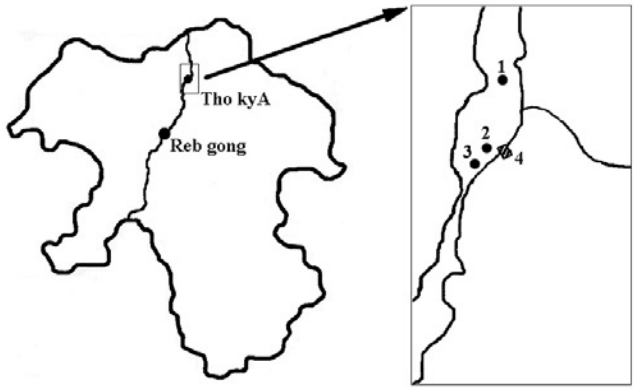
[530] Onomatopoeia for a cry praising the deity.

[531] We thank Dr. Daniel Berounsky for the following: "'Happiness to all.' *Mangal* is hard to render. It is success, luck, auspice, etc., so the translation is only approximate."

APPENDIX THREE:
REB GONG COUNTY AND THO KYA TOWN



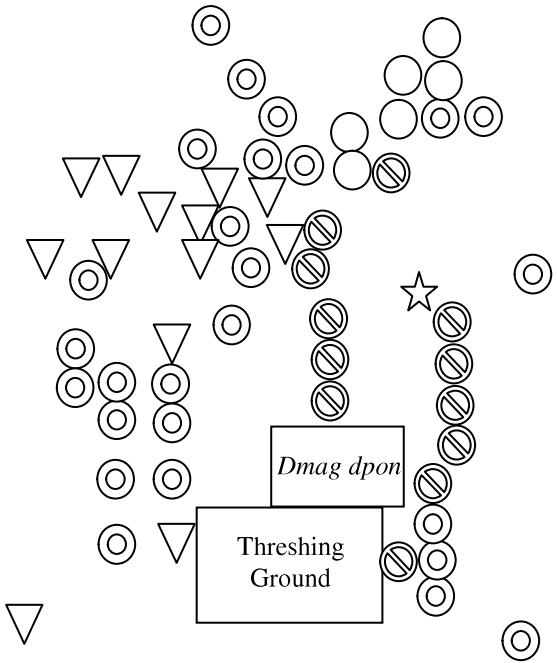
Reb gong County (black) within Rma lho Prefecture (grey) and Mtsho sngon Province within the People's Republic of China.[532]



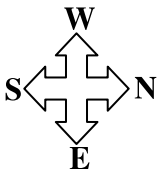
The location of Tho kyA within Reb gong County (left) and at right, Ha ra pA thur (1), Bod skor (2), and Dkar rtse dgong (3) in relation to Tho kyA Town (4).

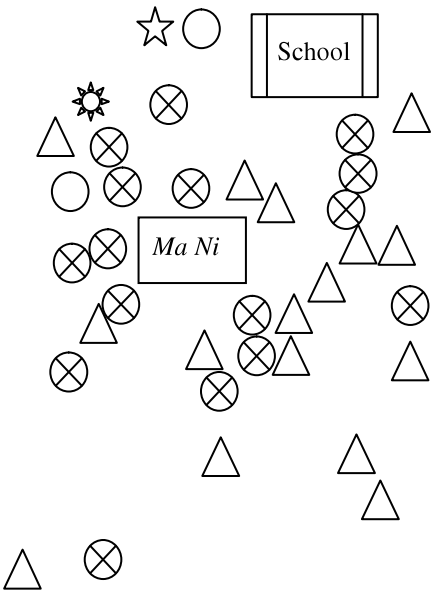
[532] This map was adapted from a map created by the Wikipedia user Croquant (http://commons.wikimedia. org/ wiki/User:Croquant) and distributed under a Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 License (http://creativecommons. org/licenses/by/3.0/).

APPENDIX FOUR:
HA RA PA THUR CLANS



- Ru gong ma tshang
- Thang ga tshang
- Rgya tshang tshang
- Sngun tsho tshang
- Phyi tsho tshang
- Sha nye tshang
- Srang mdo, site for *gsur mang*
- Chag ga
- *Bzlog shog* site





APPENDIX FIVE:
LHA PA SUCCESSION

HA RA PA THUR

Name	Birth-Death	Dates Performed as *Lha pa*
Rdo rje[533]		
Gnam lha thar	1880/1881-1960/1961	1900/1901-1945
Lcags byams	1901-1958	1919/1920-1958
Dar rgyas	1924-1959	1954-1958
Lcags byams	1970	From 2001

DKAR RTSE GDONG

Name	Birth-Death	Dates Performed as *Lha pa*
Lo don 'grub	1887-1971/1972	1906-1938
Klu byams rgyal	1909-1958	1943-1958
Mkha' byams	1914-1988/1989	1943-1958
Sha bo tshe ring	1915-1980/1981	1937-1958 1980-1988/1989
Rnam lha tshe ring	1951/1952-1980[534]	
Lha 'bum rgyal	1965	From 1986

[533] We were unable to gather birth, death and performance dates for this *lha pa*.
[534] We are uncertain of death and performance dates.

Name	Birth-Death	Dates Performed as *Lha pa*
Gri gu[535]		
Pur dge	1864/1865-1942/ 1943	
Rin chen 'bum	1907-1986	1942/1943-1957/1958
Sha bo rnam rgyal	1937	1954-1958 1963 1980-2002
Snying lcags rgyal	1968	From 1998

[535] We were unable to gather birth, death and performance dates for this *lha pa*.

APPENDIX SIX:
GLOSSARY

Entries are listed alphabetically followed by the Tibetan and when appropriate, *pinyin*, Chinese characters and English definition.

A

a bhe ཨ་ཧྥེ A colloquial term indicating affection for a young boy.

a ce ཨ་ཅེ A colloquial honorific for 'older sister' added before the names of any older female.

a da 阿大 'Father.'

a dpon ཨ་དཔོན 'Imam.'

A dpon zha ra ཨ་དཔོན་ཞ་རར 'Blind imam,' 'Bog chi'i a dpon tshang.

aila yijitai …一级台 This term refers to what *klu rol* players shouted during the performance by the same name, *aila* being onomatoepoeia for a cry to the deity and *yijitai* translating as 'first rank stage.'

A ma Gong mo ཨ་མ་གོང་མོ A mountain northeast of Ha ra pA thur and the deity who dwelt there.

A ma Klu mo ཨ་མ་ཀླུ་མོ Female deity venerated in Gling rgya, Tho kyA.

A ma Sngags srung ma ཨ་མ་སྔགས་སྲུང་མ A one horned, one breasted female Dharma protector with one eye in her forehead that opens while the other two are closed ('Jigs med chos kyi rdo rje, 2001:1,050). Venerated in the Ru 'og ma portion of Ha ra pA thur.

a ma srung ma ཨ་མ་སྲུང་མ 'Protector Mother,' any female protector for a family, clan or village. Also white rectangular paper, which varied in size and pattern, but may be twenty centimeters wide and thirty centimeters long, often made of cotton, in which patterns were cut representing coins or *nor bu*.

A mdo ཨ་མདོ་ (Anduo 安多) A mdo is distributed mainly in Mtsho nub Mongolian and Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Mtsho shar Region, Rma lho, Mtsho lho, Mtsho byang and Mgo log Tibetan Autonomous Prefectures, Mtsho sngon Province; Kan lho and Dpa' ris (Tianzhu) Tibetan Autonomous Prefectures in Kan su'u Province and Rnga ba (Aba) Tibetan Automous Prefecture in Si khron Province. Also the A mdo Tibetan dialect.

a myes ཨ་མྱེས་ Colloquial honorific added before the names of older males and male mountain deities.

A myes Ba rdzong ཨ་མྱེས་བ་རྫོང་ (Erlangye/ Erlangshen 二郎爷/二郎神) A deity venerated in Dkar rtse gdong, Ha ra pA thur, Bod skor, Tho kyA and Sa dkyil villages. One of twelve deities belonging to Ri lang *bcu gnyis*

A myes Bya khyung ཨ་མྱེས་བྱ་ཁྱུང་ Considered by Reb gong residents to be the highest and most powerful deity in Reb gong.

A myes Dar rgya ཨ་མྱེས་དར་རྒྱ་ A deity venerated in such villages as Ha ra pA thur, Dkar rtse gdong and Bod skor. A deity in Ri lang *bcu gnyis*.

A myes Dmag dpon ཨ་མྱེས་དམག་དཔོན་ A myes Ba rdzong.

A myes Khu thog ཨ་མྱེས་ཁུ་ཐོག་ A deity enshrined in the Sha bo rgya mtsho home in Ru 'og ma, Ha ra pA thur.

A myes KyA ting ཨ་མྱེས་ཀྱ་ཏིང་ A deity once enshrined where the Bdud lha byams home is now located in Thang ga, Ha ra pA thur.

A myes Lha ri ཨ་མྱེས་ལྷ་རི་ The most important deity for Gling rgya Village, inhabiting a mountain approximately half a kilometer from the village "…he is both gentle and violent, depending on circumstances, and he rides a white horse" (Dpal ldan bkra shis and Stuart, 1998:35-37).

A myes Rma chen ཨ་མྱེས་རྨ་ཆེན་ A mountain in Rma chu County, Mgo log Prefecture and the deity who dwelt there.

A myes Sman ri ཨ་མྱེས་སྨན་རི་ A mountain 17.5 kilometers southwest of Mgar rtse Township government offices and the deity who dwelt there.

A myes Stag lung ཨ་མྱེས་སྟག་ལུང་ A mountain southeast of Rong bo and the deity who dwelt there.

a myes tshang ཨ་མྱེས་ཚང་ 'Grandfather family,' the most important deity worshiped in a village.

A myes Ye mtho ཨ་མྱེས་ཡེ་མཐོ་ A mountain southeast of Ha ra pA thur and the deity who dwelt there.

O rgyan Padmas mdzad pa'i bka' bsdus ཨོ་རྒྱན་པདྨས་མཛད་པའི་བཀའ་བསྡུས་ 'Collection of the Doctrine Written by Padma 'byung gnas.'

a rgya ཨ་རྒྱ་ A colloquial honorific for 'older brother' added before the name of any older male.

a yes ཨ་ཡེས་ A colloquial honorific for female elders.

a zhang ཨ་ཞང་ 'Maternal uncle' refers also to a bride's escort, usually consisting of the bride's maternal uncle, male family and elder male clan members.

B

Ba chu 'og བ་ཆུ་འོག་ 'Under the Drainage Spout' was a place name in Ru 'og ma, Ha ra pA thur.

Bag rogs བག་རོགས་ Bride's assistant.

Ban de tshang བན་དེ་ཚང་ A vanished Ha ra pA thur clan.

ban ser po བན་སེར་པོ་ Colloquial term for *glud rta*.

Bao'an zu 保安族 Bao'an Nationality.

Ba rdzong བ་རྫོང་ Short form of A myes Ba rdzong and Ba rdzong ri lang.

Ba rdzong ri lang བ་རྫོང་རི་ལང་ A myes Ba rdzong.

'Ba' rgya འབའ་རྒྱ་ Dkar rtse gdong Village.

BA rong བྱ་རོང་ One of the nine valleys in Reb gong.

Bde rong བདེ་རོང་ One of the nine valleys in Reb gong.

bdud བདུད་ A group of deities belonging to Lha srin sde brgyad.

be ha བེ་ཧ་ Refers to what was shouted by *klu rol* players during the *klu rol* performance with no name.

Bem rdzing བེམ་རྫིང་ Probably the name of a body of water that we could not locate.

bgegs བགེགས་ 'Obstructive spirits.'

bka' brgyad བཀའ་བརྒྱད་ 'The eight pronouncements of Padma 'byung gnas,' the name of a ritual held in Ru 'og ma and the scripture, Bka' brgyad, chanted during the ritual.

Bka' bsdus བཀའ་བསྡུས་ An abbreviation of O rgyan Padmas mdzad pa'i bka' bsdus.

Bka' bzhag dam bzhag བཀའ་བཞག་དམ་བཞག་ 'Vow commanding,' the process of a lama investing a *lha pa*.

Bka' 'gyur བཀའ་འགྱུར་ Tibetan translation of the Tripitaka (Thob. nd.).

Bka' sdod བཀའ་སྡོད་ A Dharma protector who takes orders (Thob. nd.).

Bkra shis do kha ma བཀྲ་ཤིས་དོ་ཁ་མ Place where Rje do kha ma was sculpted.

Bla brang བླ་བྲང་ (Labuleng 拉卜楞) Short form of Bla brang Bkra shis 'khyil Monastery, Bsang chu County, Kan lho Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Kan su'u Province.

bla rgan བླ་རྒན་ An aged monk.

bla rtsa བླ་རྩ་ 'Life force channel' and "vein the pulse of which can be used to indicate long or short life" (Goldstein, 2001:744).

bla rsta 'khum བླ་རྩ་འཁུམ་ 'Shrinking life force,' 'to be frightened.'

bla rtsa mi tshang བླ་རྩ་མི་ཚང་ 'Missing a life force channel' indicating a stupid or foolish person, used also to describe *lha pa*.

Blon che བློན་ཆེ (Lancai 兰采) Blon che Village, Blon che Township.

'bobs འབོབས Embroidered light blue socks, covering the shins and ankles worn by *klu rol* players during *klu rol*.

Bod lo བོད་ལོ 'Tibetan year,' the twelfth lunar month.

Bod skor བོད་སྐོར (Xiazhuang 下庄) Bod skor Village, Tho kyA.

bol ras བོལ་རས Colloquial term for Tibetan felt boots.

Bon བོན (Benjiao 笨教) A pre-Buddhist religion of Tibet and some neighboring areas, first promulgated in Zhang zhung, an ancient name of Gu ge Province in western Tibet. Founded by Gshen rab mi bo (Thob. nd.).

Bon gyi theg pa rim dgu བོན་གྱི་ཐེག་པ་རིམ་དགུ 'Nine Bon Vehicles:' The Four Causal Vehicles 1) *phywa gshen*, 2) *snang gshen*, 3) *'phrul gshen*, 4) *srid gshen*; The Four Fruition Vehicles 5) *dge bsnyen*, 6) *drang srong*, 7) *a dkar*, 8) *ye gshen*; and The Special Great Vehicle 9) *yang rtse bla med* (Nam mkha'i nor bu, 1996:360).

Brag dkar བྲག་དཀར་ A deity venerated in Ha ra pA thur.

bra se NaM བྲ་སེ་ནཾ 'To clearly demonstrate' (Nam mkha'i nor bu,1996:144).

'bras thug འབྲས་ཐུག Thick rice porridge often mixed with butter or rapeseed oil, raisins and jujubes.

'bring rim rgyugs འབྲིང་རིམ་རྒྱུགས (*zhongkao* 中考) 'Middle exam,' senior middle school entrance examination.

bsang བསང་ A ritual of burning juniper, wheat flour and so on as offerings to deities. The substances burned were also called *bsang*.

Bsang chu བསང་ཆུ (Xiahe 夏河) Bsang chu County, Kan lho Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture.

bsang dpe བསང་དཔེ The scripture recited during the *bsang* ritual.

bsang gtong ba བསང་གཏོང་བ A term for *bsang*.

bsang mchod བསང་མཆོད A term for *bsang* and *bsang dpe*.

bsang phud pa བསང་ཕུད་པ A term for *bsang*.

bsang rdzas བསང་རྫས Substances burned during the *bsang* ritual.

Bse rong བསེ་རོང Bse rong One of the nine valleys in Reb gong.

Bsngo ba བསྔོ་བ 'Dedication,' a scripture recited during *gsur mang* on New Year Eve in Ru 'og ma.

Bstan 'gyur བསྟན་འགྱུར A collection of Indian commentaries on the Buddha's teachings translated into Tibetan (Thob. nd.).

Bstan ma bcu gnyis བསྟན་མ་བཅུ་གཉིས A group of goddesses including: Rdo rje kun grags ma, Rdo rje g.ya' ma skyong, Rdo rje kun tu bzang (Rdo rje kun tu grags or Rdo rje kun tu bzang ma), Rdo rje bgegs kyi gtso, Rdo rje spyan gcig ma (Rdo rje g.yu bun ma), Rdo rje dpal gyi yum (Rdo rje glang mo che, Rdo rje khyung btsun ma), Rdo rje klu mo, Rdo rje grags mo rgyal (Rdo rje drag mo rgyal or Rdo rje grags rgyal ma), Rdo rje bod khams skyong (Bod khams skyong or Rdo rje dpal mo che), Rdo rje sman gtsig (gcig) ma, Rdo rje g.ya' mo bsil (Sman btsun chen mo rdo rje g.ya' ma skyong, Rdo rje g.ya' ma bsil or Rdo rje dbyar mo bsil, Rdo rje g.ya' mo sil) and Rdo rje g.yu sgron ma (Rdo rje zu le ma, Rdo rje gzugs legs ma, or Rdo rje dril bu gzugs legs ma, Rdo rje zu le sman) (Dung dkar blo bzang 'phrin las, 2002:1,026).

btsan བཙན "…one of the most important classes of Tibetan demoniacal deities. The *btsan* are mostly

represented as ferocious red riders wearing armor and riding red horses. In the right hand they usually brandish a red lance with a flag of the same color, while the left hand throws the characteristic red 'snare of the *btsan*' (*btsan zhags*)" (Nebesky-Wojkowitz, 1996:175).

btso dmar བཙོ་དམར 'Red purification,' the ritual *lha pa* conducted to cure leprosy by spitting liquor into a pot of boiling oil.

bu བུ 'Son.'

Bum sgrub བུམ་སྒྲུབ A scripture chanted to empower water in a ritual vase.

Bya dkar lung བྱ་དཀར་ལུང (Shihalong 舍哈龙) Bya dkar lung Village, Tho kyA.

byad phud བྱད་ཕུད Probably a misspelling of *byad phur*.

byad phur བྱད་ཕུར 'Black magic.'

Bya khyung བྱ་ཁྱུང (Xiaqiong 夏琼) A myes Bya khyung.

Bya me བྱ་མེ Ha ra pA thur Village. Certain elder villagers believed in 2008 that Bya me was the name of the original owner of Ha ra pA thur territory.

Byang chub བྱང་ཆུབ (Shuangchu 双处) Byang chub Village, Tho kyA.

bzhi ba'i smyung gnas བཞི་བའི་སྨྱུང་གནས 'Fourth month fast,' a fasting ritual held from the fourteenth to the sixteenth days of the fourth lunar month in Ha ra pA thur.

bzlog shog བཟློག་ཤོག 'Reverse paper,' the *klu rol* performance, the paper printed with a curse and the wooden frame on which the paper was pasted.

C

Chag dbang tho lo'u ཆག་དབང་ཐོ་ལོའུ Mongolian place name in Ha ra pA thur. Dr. Juha Janhunen suggested that the

term translates as 'White Rabbit' or 'The One With the White One.'

Chag ga mtho ཆག་གཱ་མཐོ Probably a short form of Chag dbang tho lo'u.

'cham འཆམ A ritual masked dance.

chang ཆང (*baijiu* 白酒) Colloquial term for *chang dkar* 'white liquor.'

Che ba rin po che'i gsol 'debs ཆེ་བ་རིན་པོ་ཆེའི་གསོལ་འདེབས Prayer for A lags Che ba rin po che recited during *gsur mang* on New Year Eve in Ru 'og ma.

Chengnei 城内 'Inside the Castle,' one of three portions of Tho kyA Village.

Chengwai 城外 'Outside the Castle,' one of three portions of Tho kyA Village.

che sri ཆེ་སྲི "Malignant spirits attacking adults" (Nebesky-Wojkowitz, 1996:216).

chob ཆོབ (*huicai* 烩菜) A soup made of mutton, beef, onion and long noodles.

cho ris bzang pa'i bu tsha ཆོ་རིས་བཟང་པའི་བུ་ཚ A person with no relatives who had intermarried for seven generations in both matrilineal and patrilineal lines.

chos skyong ཆོས་སྐྱོང Dharma protector.

chos thog ཆོས་ཐོག Religious ceremony or assembly.

chu bdag ཆུ་བདག 'Water owner,' also the first owner of land.

Chu khog ཆུ་ཁོག (Qukuhu 曲库乎) Chu khog Township, Reb gong County.

chung sri ཆུང་སྲི Spirits who kill children (Nebesky-Wojkowitz, 1996:216).

cong rdog ཅོང་རྡོག Bread made of flattened dough smeared with turmeric, rolled up, sliced into sections and steamed.

cu(chu)gang ཅུ་(ཆུ་)གང 'Bamboo pitch,' one of the six precious substances.

D

Dar grong དར་གྲོང Dar grong Village, Tho kyA.

Dadui 大队 'Big Brigade.'

Dahejia 大河家 Jishishan Bao'an, Dongxiang and Salar Nationalities' County in southwest Kan su'u Province, bordering Mtsho sngon Province.

Dam can དམ་ཅན Short form of Dam can rdo rje legs pa.

Dam can rdo rje legs pa དམ་ཅན་རྡོ་རྗེ་ལེགས་པ 'Protector Deity Rdo rje legs pa.'

Dar rgya ri lang དར་རྒྱ་རི་ལང A myes Dar rgya.

Datong 大通 Datong Hui and Tu Autonomous County, Mtsho sngon Province.

dbon དབོན Colloquial term for Rnying ma ba practitioners.

Dbus gtsang དབུས་གཙང (Xizang 西藏) The Tibet Autonomous Region.

dbyar chos དབྱར་ཆོས 'Summer chanting session,' held by *sngags pa rnying ba* from Gling rgya, Nags rgya, Ri rtsa, Lha khang, 'Jam, Ha ra pA thur, Byang chub, Stag yan, Nyang, Bya dkar lung and Dar grong villages, Tho kyA. The *sngags pa* gathered in a *sngags khang* in one of the villages from the fifth to the eighth of the fifth lunar month. Villages took turns holding this ceremony annually.

dge chos དགེ་ཆོས 'Virtuous charity,' a name for *gson dge*.

Dge lugs pa དགེ་ལུགས་པ (Gelupai 格鲁派) One of four sects of Tibetan Buddhism, founded by Tsong kha pa (1357-1419). The other sects are: Rnying ma ba, Bka' rgyud pa and Sa skya ba.

dge skos དགེ་སྐོས 'Disciplinarian,' manager of such ceremonies as *dpyid chos*, *dbyar chos*, *ston chos* and *dgun chos*. *Dge skos* provided food and donated cash to ceremony participants.

dgra lha དགྲ་ལྷ 'Enemy deity' or 'gods of warriors' (Nebesky-Wojkowitz, 1996:318-340).

dgra lha bcu gsum དགྲ་ལྷ་བཅུ་གསུམ 'Thirteen gods of warriors' (Nebesky-Wojkowitz, 1996:318-340).

Dgra lha'i dpang bstod དགྲ་ལྷའི་དཔང་བསྟོད 'Lofty Praise to *dgra lha*,' scripture chanted by Rnying ma ba practitioners during *lab tse* festivals in Ha ra pA thur.

dgra non pa དགྲ་ནོན་པ 'Oppressing the enemy,' when *lab tse* festival participants jumped over a pile of stones and shot at a straw effigy.

Dgu chu དགུ་ཆུ (Longwuhe 隆务河) 'Nine Rivers,' the river originating from Dpyi sa Township in Rtse khog County, flowing through Btsan mo, Chu khog, Rong bo and Tho kyA into the Yellow River in Dgu rong, Gcan tsha County.

dgun chos དགུན་ཆོས 'Winter chanting session,' held by *sngags pa rnying ba* from Gling rgya, Nags rgya, Ri rtsa, Lha khang, 'Jam, Ha ra pA thur, Byang chub, Stag yan, Nyang, Bya dkar lung and Dar grong villages, Tho kyA. The *sngags pa* gathered in a village *sngags khang* from the third to the seventh days of the tenth lunar month. Villages annually held the ceremony in turn.

dgung bsang དགུང་བསང 'Evening *bsang*.'

Dgu rong དགུ་རོང One of the nine valleys in Reb gong. Also, Dgu rong Village, Gcan tsha County.

dkar gtor དཀར་གཏོར 'White *gtor ma*,' *gtor ma* smeared with melted butter and offered to peaceful deities such as Sgrol ma.

Dkar rtse gdong དཀར་རྩེ་གདོང (Gadui 尕对) Dkar rtse gdong Village, Tho kyA.

dmag dpon དམག་དཔོན (*miao* 庙) 'Military general,' a colloquial term for the village shrine.

Dmag dpon mthon po sgang དམག་དཔོན་མཐོན་པོ་སྒང་ 'High General Hill,' southeast of Ha ra pA thur where the village *lab tse* was located.

Dmag dpon rdo rje dgra 'joms དམག་དཔོན་རྡོ་རྗེ་དགྲ་འཇོམས 'Vajra General Subduing Enemies,' A myes Ba rdzong.

dmar gtor དམར་གཏོར་ 'Red *gtor ma*,' *gtor ma* smeared with purple-red dye called *'bri smug* or *smug rtsi*, offered to wrathful deities such as Dharma protectors (Dung dkar blo bzang 'phrin las, 2002:974).

dpa' bo དཔའ་བོ་ '(Spiritual) hero' (Thob. nd.).

Dpal ldan lha mo དཔལ་ལྡན་ལྷ་མོ་ The protector deity of Tibet.

Dpa' lung དཔའ་ལུང་ (Hualong 化隆) Dpa' lung County, Mtsho sngon Province.

dpon po དཔོན་པོ་ 'Tribal leader,' a patrilineal position only recognized within a village.

Dpung nge ri lang དཔུང་ངེ་རི་ལང་ The most important deity venerated in Ha ra pA thur and respected by villagers as their natal deity. A deity in Ri lang *bcu gnyis*.

dpyid chos དཔྱིད་ཆོས་ 'Spring chanting session,' held by *sngags pa rnying ba* from Gling rgya, Nags rgya, Ri rtsa, Lha khang, 'Jam, Ha ra pA thur, Byang chub, Stag yan, Bya dkar lung, Nyang and Dar grong villages, Tho kyA; Phye dri, Sa skor, Ha lung, Ngo mo, Sdong nge, Sman 'tshong, Gyang ri, Rgyal bo sgang and Chu ca villages, Rgyal bo Township and Spyang lung and Lcang skya villages, Chu khog Township. The *sngags pa* from these villages gathered in Khyung dgon Monastery in Spyang lung from the eighth to the thirteenth of the first lunar month for this ceremony, also called *khyung dgon ma Ni*.

dred དྲེད་ 'Brown bear.'

dregs pa དྲེགས་པ 'The haughty ones,' a group of deities often "depicted with a haughty-fierce facial expression" (Nebesky-Wojkowitz, 1996:3-4). Also called *'jig rten pa'i srung ma*.

duizhang 队长 'Brigade leader,' a village leader.

'du khang འདུ་ཁང 'Assembly hall.'

'du khang gsar ba འདུ་ཁང་གསར་པ 'New assembly hall,' one of the two temples in Spen dkar thang Monastery.

'du khang rnying ba འདུ་ཁང་རྙིང་པ 'Old assembly hall,' one of the two temples in Spen dkar thang Monastery.

du nag དུ་ནག 'Black cigarette,' a colloquial term for opium.

dus rin དུས་རིན Colloquial term for the one year anniversary of a person's death.

dza ti ཛ་ཏི 'Nutmeg,' one of the six precious substances.

G

gar གར Both the name of a specific performance during *klu rol*, and any traditional performance involving simultaneous singing and dancing in Reb gong.

gar ma གར་མ A female dancer.

Ga tsi gdong གཱ་ཙི་གདོང Dkar rtse gdong.

gdon gegs གདོན་གེགས 'Malevolent spirits.'

Gdugs dkar གདུགས་དཀར 'White Umbrella,' the name of a female deity who protects against various obstacles. Also a short form of the scripture Gdugs dkar mchog grub ma bzhugs so.

Gdugs dkar *khri 'don* གདུགས་དཀར་ཁྲི་འདོན 'Reading Gdugs dkar 10,000 times,' an annual ceremony held from the twenty-third to the twenty-ninth of the tenth lunar month during which Ha ra pA thur villagers read or recited Gdugs dkar mchog grub ma bzhugs so.

Gdugs dkar mchog grub ma bzhugs so གདུགས་དཀར་མཆོག་གྲུབ་མ་བཞུགས་སོ། The scripture chanted during *gdugs dkar khri 'don*.

glang tis གླང་ཏིས Uncastrated bull.

gleng log གླེང་ལོག 'Accusation.'

Gling rgya གླིང་རྒྱ (Liangjia 浪加) Gling rgya Village, Tho kyA.

glud rta གླུད་རྟ (*qianma* 钱马) 'Ransom horse,' yellow rectangular paper, twenty-five centimeters long and ten centimeters wide, printed with green ink displaying a phoenix, dragon, a coin and two horses. Requests of the deity were printed in Chinese. *Glud rta* were glued above the center of the door, to the door, and/ or on either side of the door of the *dmag dpon*. Certain Dkar rtse gdong families glued them above the center of their courtyard gates, windows and doors in their homes.

gnas bdag གནས་བདག 'Regional deities.'

gnas tshang གནས་ཚང 'Lodging family,' the home that was the final site for *klu rol* performances on the eighteenth and nineteenth days of the sixth lunar month.

Gnyan brjid gong sngon གཉན་བརྗིད་གོང་སྔོན "[He] is another local deity of Amdo (*A mdo*) …also known as the *dregs pa'i mnga' bdag gNyan rje gung sngon* or *Yul gyi lha gnyan chen po*" (Nebesky-Wojkowitz, 1996:215).

Gnyan chen གཉན་ཆེན A deity venerated in such villages as Bya dkar lung, Ha ra pA thur, Bod skor and Dkar rtse gdong, Tho kyA; Lha sde Village, Rong bo and Gnyan thog Village, Gnyan thog Township. This deity was enshrined in Bya me rgyal's home in Ru 'og ma.

Gnyan Ma ma le gu གཉན་མ་མ་ལེ་གུ A deity believed to be Gnyan rje Sngo la g.yu rtse's wife. "She is of a brilliant white color, has a beautiful appearance, and her attributes are a *mda' dar* and a flat bowl full of jewels. She rides a hind" (Nebesky-Wojkowitz, 1996:214).

Gnyan rje Sngo la g.yu rtse གཉན་རྗེ་སྔོ་ལ་གཡུ་རྩེ A mountain at the border of Zhong hwa County and Bsang chu County, Kan su'u Province.

Gnyan sras གཉན་སྲས 'Gnyan Prince' Mtho ri rgyal bo, Gnyan rje Sngo la g.yu rtse's son. "His body is pale-red, he brandishes a lance, a snare, and rides on a blue dragon of turquoise" (Nebesky-Wojkowitz, 1996:214).

Gnyan thog གཉན་ཐོག (Nianduhu 年都乎) Gnyan thog Village, Gnyan thog Township.

go ka གོ་ཀ A colloquial term for the main room of a family house with an attached adobe stove, sometimes called *mi khang*. It was where families dined and congregated in winter.

Gong mo kha གོང་མོ་ཁ A mountain northeast of Ha ra pA thur.

Gong sman lha ri གོང་སྨན་ལྷ་རི A deity believed to be Rma rgyal spom ra's wife. "…[She] carries a vessel full of *amrta*, a mirror, and rides on a stag" (Nebesky-Wojkowitz, 1996:211).

go re bsreg ma གོ་རེ་བསྲེག་མ 'Baked bread,' bread cooked in hot earth.

go re dmar po གོ་རེ་དམར་པོ 'Red bread,' square and triangular bread fried in rape-seed oil.

gos btags གོས་བཏགས Ceremonial silk scarves.

gos lwa གོས་ལྭ A silk Tibetan robe.

grogs bdag གྲོགས་བདག Perhaps a misspelling of *grong bdag*.

grong bdag གྲོང་བདག 'Village lord.'

grwa pa གྲྭ་པ 'Monk.'

Gsa' lung གསའ་ལུང The main mountain deity venerated by Sdong skam villagers and Ru gong ma families in Thang ga.

Gsa' mo nags གསའ་མོ་ནགས 'Gsa' mo Forest' was northwest of Ha ra pA thur in Gcan tsha County.

gsang bdag གསང་བདག The ritual held in Ru 'og ma and the scripture Gsang bdag chanted during the ritual.

Gsang bdag dregs pa kun 'dul གསང་བདག་དྲེགས་པ་ཀུན་འདུལ A deity venerated as Ru 'og ma villager's *yi dam*.

Gsar ma ba གསར་མ་བ 'New follower,' a follower of the Dge lugs pa Sect of Tibetan Buddhism.

Gser kha nyag ga གསེར་ཁ་ཉག་ག 'Gser kha Notch' was located at the border of Reb gong and Zhong hwa on the eastern side of Gling rgya.

Gser 'od གསེར་འོད 'The Sutra of Sacred Golden Light' (Thob. nd.), carried when female villagers circumambulated fields during *chos 'khor*.

gson dge གསོན་དགེ 'Living charity,' a party held for people over sixty.

gsum pa'i **Sgrol ma** གསུམ་པའི་སྒྲོལ་མ 'Third Month Sgrol ma,' a ritual in which all monks from Ha ra pA thur, living in both Rong bo and Spen dkar thang monasteries, gathered in the *ma Ni* from the first to the fourth days of the third lunar month and chanted Sgrol ma 1,000 times and MaNDal bzhi ba.

gsur mang གསུར་མང *Gsur*, a burnt offering made of roasted *rtsam pa*. *Mang* means 'many.' This ritual offering for the dead was held on the eve of the lunar New Year.

gter གཏེར A cloth bag containing a coin, brick tea and barley. *Gter* could also be made in a bowl or ceramic vase.

gter bdag གཏེར་བདག 'Treasure lord.'

gtor ma གཏོར་མ "Cones made of roasted barley mixed with butter, colored and decorated in different ways according to the type of deity to which they are addressed" (Thob. nd.).

Gtsos གཙོས (Hezuo 合作) Gtsos City, Kan lho Prefecture.

gung bsang གུང་བསང་ 'Noon *bsang*.'

gur gum གུར་གུམ 'Saffron,' one of the six precious substances.

Gu ru mtshan brgyad གུ་རུ་མཚན་བརྒྱད 'Eight Manifestations of Gu ru rin po che,' Gu ru padma 'byung gnas, Gu ru shAkya seng ge, Gu ru padma saMbha, Gu ru nyi ma 'od zer, Gu ru sengge sgra sgrog, Gu ru rdo rje gro lod, Gu ru mtsho skyes rdo rje, Gu ru padma rgyal po and Gu ru blo ldan mchog sred (Thob. nd.).

G.ya' ma bkra shis 'khyil གཡའ་མ་བཀྲ་ཤིས་འཁྱིལ G.ya' ma bkra shis 'khyil Monastery, Zho 'ong dpyi Township, Reb gong.

Gya steng བྱ་སྟེང Gya myes KyA ting.

Gya ting བྱ་ཏིང Gya myes KyA ting.

G.yer gshong གཡེར་གཤོང G.yer gshong Monastery, Blon che Township.

Gyo mo བྱོ་མོ Both the name of the mountain and the deity who dwelt there.

gza' གཟའ A class of deities belonging to Lha srin sde brgyad.

Gza' mchog ra hu la གཟའ་མཆོག་ར་ཧུ་ལ A Dharma protector venerated in Ru 'og ma.

gzan གཟན 'Monastic shawl.'

gzhi bdag གཞི་བདག 'Base owner' or 'local deity,' mountain deities.

gzims mal ba གཟིམ་མལ་བ 'Bed-chamber servant.'

gzims mal nas གཟིམ་མལ་ནས 'In the bedroom.'

gzungs gzhug གཟུངས་གཞུག Items placed inside a statue by monks or lamas to empower it.

H

Ha ra a nghI ཧ་ར་ཨ་ངྷི Bse rdo rje 'chang's spelling of Ha ra pA thur (Mkha' byams, ND:1).

Ha ra du ཧ་ར་དུ Ha ra pA thur.

Ha ra ba nghI ཧ་ར་བ་ངྷི A spelling of Ha ra pA thur ('Jigs med theg mchog, 1988:436).

Ha ra ba ti ཧ་ར་བ་ཏི Sman pa Rdo rje's spelling of Ha ra pA thur.

Ha ra pa dur ཧ་ར་པ་དུར A spelling of Ha ra pA thur (Lce nag tshang hUM chen and Ye shes 'od zer sgrol ma, 2004:252).

Ha ra pA thur ཧ་ར་པ་ཐུར (Halabatu 哈拉巴图) Spelling of the village name that village elders preferred in 2008.

ho rang ཧོ་རང Colloquial term for *pho brang*.

hor zla ཧོར་ཟླ (*nongli* 农历) Chinese lunar calendar.

Huangzhong 湟中 Huangzhong County, Mtsho sngon Province.

Huzhu 互助 Huzhu Tu Autonomous County, Mtsho sngon Province.

J

'Jam skor འཇམ་སྐོར (Jianke 尖科) 'Jam skor Village, Tho kyA.

'Jam stong dpon འཇམ་སྟོང་དཔོན "Jam 1,000 leader' or "Jam leader of over 1,000 households,' title of the traditional leader of all Smad pa residents.

'jig rten pa'i srung ma འཇིག་རྟེན་པའི་སྲུང་མ Buddhist protectors in the world (Nebesky-Wojkowitz, 1996:409).

K

Ka ci ཀ་ཅི(Linxia 临夏) Ka ci City, Kan su'u Province.

ka ko la ཀ་ཀོ་ལ 'Cubeb,' one of the six precious substances.

Kan lho ཀན་ལྷོ (Gannan 甘南) Kan lho Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Kan su'u Province.

Kan su'u ཀན་སུའུ (Gansu 甘肃) Kan su'u Province.

ka rdo ཀ་རྡོ་ 'Pillar stone,' a round stone placed underneath a pillar.

Ka ring ཀ་རིང་ (Garang 尕让) Ka ring Township, Zhong hwa County.

kha btags ཁ་བཏགས་ Tibetan ceremonial scarf.

kha 'bugs ཁ་འབུགས་ 'Mouth skewer,' the thirty centimeter long metal spike used to pierce player's facial cheeks and backs during *klu rol*.

kha 'bugs rgyag pa ཁ་འབུགས་རྒྱག་པ་ 'Mouth skewer piercing,' the *klu rol* performance when players facial cheeks and backs were pierced.

Khams ཁམས་ (Kang 康) Khams is comprised of fifty counties, distributed between the Chinese provinces of Mtsho sngon (six counties) Si khron (sixteen counties), Yun nan (Yunnan) (three counties) and the eastern portion of the Tibet Autonomous Region (twenty-five counties). Also the Khams Tibetan dialect.

Khams po tshang ཁམས་པོ་ཚང་ A name for Ru 'og ma.

'khar rnga འཁར་རྔ་ 'Gong.'

Kho tshe ཁོ་ཚེ་ (科才) Kho tshe Village, Zho 'ong dpyi Township.

khog mtshon ཁོག་མཚོན་ 'Belly stabbing,' the action of the *lha pa* stabbing himself to cure disease.

Khri ka ཁྲི་ཀ (Guide 贵德) Khri ka County, Mtsho sngon Province.

Khri ka'i Yul lha ཁྲི་ཀའི་ཡུལ་ལྷ་ A mountain deity venerated in Ha ra pA thur.

khro ril ཁྲོ་རིལ་ 'Small bells' mounted on a frame and hung in the shrine. The bells were rung when offerings were made to alert the deity to the offering.

Khu thog ཁུ་ཐོག་ A short form of A myes Khu thog.

Khu thogs ཁུ་ཐོགས་ A myes Khu thog.

'khyig bdag འཁྱིག་བདག A group responsible for managing *klu rol*, protecting the fields and regulating when grass could be cut on the edges of fields. The membership of this group changed annually on a rotating basis.

khyi phrug len pa ཁྱི་ཕྲུག་ལེན་པ 'Puppy removal,' a ritual of curing disease when *lha pa* sucked blood from a patient's back or shot them.

khyung ཁྱུང 'Garuda.'

klu ཀླུ 'Water deity,' a class of deities belonging to Lha srin sde brgyad.

klu rol ཀླུ་རོལ A summer festival held by villagers to entertain local deities and residents.

ko re dmar po ཀོ་རེ་དམར་པོ 'Red bread.'

Ko'u sde ཀོ་འུ་སྡེ (Gude 古德) Ko'u sde Village, Chu khog Township, Reb gong.

KyA ting ཀྱ་ཏིང Short form of A myes KyA ting.

L

lab tse ལབ་ཙེ The name of an altar and the festival in which the altar is constructed and renewed. In 2008, the Ha ra pA thur *lab tse* consisted of many wooden arrows ranging in length from one to twenty meters, placed in an approximately one meter square by one meter tall concrete box, with arrowheads pointing down.

Lab tse nyag ga ལབ་ཙེ་ཉག་གཱ 'Lab tse Notch' was where Ha ra pA thur villagers burned *bsang* on the eighth day of the first lunar month.

Lab tse sgang ལབ་ཙེ་སྒང 'Lab tse Hill' was southeast of Ha ra pA thur where the village *lab tse* was located.

La mo sul chu ལ་མོ་སུལ་ཆུ (Lamocuohe 拉莫措河) 'La mo sul River' originated in Rgyal bo Township and flowed through such villages as Stag yan, Bya dkar lung, Thig thig (Xincheng), Tho kyA and Bod skor.

La mo sul Gram pa ལ་མོ་སུལ་གྲམ་པ 'La mo sul Riverbed' was between Bod skor and Dkar rtse gdong.

lang gzugs ལང་གཟུགས A *lang kha* without a name written on it.

lang kha ལང་ཁ A piece of paper depicting the figure of a person with a huge belly, used for cursing. The names of those targeted were written on the person's body.

lcags sngags ལྕགས་སྔགས 'Metal incantation,' the ritual of curing disease when the *lha pa* burned his tongue with a knife or scythe and blew on the infected area of the patient's body.

Lcang skya ལྕང་སྐྱ (Jiangshenjia 江什加) Lcang skya Village, Chu khog Township.

Ledu 乐都 Ledu County, Mtsho sngon Province.

lha ལྷ 'Deity,' one of the Lha srin sde brgyad.

lha ba ལྷ་བ 'Cartilage,' colloquial pronunciation of *lha pa*.

lha bsngo ལྷ་བསྔོ 'Deity dedication,' the name of a ritual held by Ha ra pA thur villagers on the fourth and fifth days of the first lunar month and the Lha bsngo scripture, recited by Rka sar *lha pa* before 1997.

lha gsar ལྷ་གསར 'New *lha pa*' (Mkhar rtse rgyal, 2006:127).

Lha khams po tshang ལྷ་ཁམས་པོ་ཚང Ａ name for Ru 'og ma.

Lha khang ལྷ་ཁང (Lukang 录康) Lha khang Village, Tho kyA.

Lha mkhar ལྷ་མཁར 'Deity Castle,' probably indicating a temple at the later location of the Potala Palace.

lha pa ལྷ་པ (*wushi/ fashi* 诬师/ 法师) 'Deity man,' a trance medium.

lha phab pa ལྷ་ཕབ་པ 'Deity descending,' the actions of burning *bsang*, reciting scripture, beating gongs and drums and shouting the names of deities beseeching them to possess the *lha pa*.

lha rgyud ལྷ་རྒྱུད་ '*Lha pa* lineage,' the blood relationship with a *lha pa*.

Lha ri ལྷ་རི་ A short form of A myes Lha ri.

lha rtsed ལྷ་རྩེད་ 'Deity play,' a dance performed by *lha pa* during *klu rol* and *lha bsngo* and by *klu rol* players.

Lha sa ལྷ་ས་ (Lasa 拉萨) The capital city of the Tibet Autonomous Region.

Lha sde ལྷ་སྡེ་ Lha sde Village, Rong bo.

Lha srin sde brgyad ལྷ་སྲིན་སྡེ་བརྒྱད་ 'Eight Haughty Classes of Deities and Demons.'

li shi ལི་ཤི་ 'Cloves,' one of the six precious substances.

lnga ba'i tshes lnga ལྔ་བའི་ཚེས་ལྔ་ 'The fifth day of the fifth month,' a festival held by Ha ra pA thur villagers on the fifth day of the fifth lunar month during which female villagers circumambulated fields carrying scriptures and the *ser tho* was built.

Lo gsar ལོ་གསར་ (Chunjie 春节) The Chinese lunar New Year.

Ltung bshags ལྟུང་བཤགས་ A short form of Ltung bshags bzhugs so.

Ltung bshags bzhugs so ལྟུང་བཤགས་བཞུགས་སོ་ 'Confessions' or 'Confession of Misdeeds,' part of Phung po gsum gyi mdo.

lung dang rtogs pa'i bstan pa ལུང་དང་རྟོགས་པའི་བསྟན་པ་ 'The doctrine of statement and realization.'

lus khog ལུས་ཁོག་ 'Inside the body,' a name for a trance medium, with the deity being inside the *lus khog*'s body.

lus lha ལུས་ལྷ་ 'Body deity,' deities inhabiting people's bodies.

M

Ma cig dpal ldan lha mo མ་ཅིག་དཔལ་ལྡན་ལྷ་མོ་ Dpal ldan lha mo.

mag rogs མག་རོགས་ 'Groom's assistant,' accompanied the groom at his wedding party.

Ma gza' rdo gsum མ་གཟའ་རྡོ་གསུམ A short form of three deities' names: Ma cig dpal ldan lha mo, Gza' mchog ra hu la and Dam can rdo rje legs pa.

Ma ma lu gu མ་མ་ལུ་གུ Gnyan Ma ma le gu.

ma mo མ་མོ A class of deities belonging to Lha srin sde brgyad.

MaNDal bzhi ba མཎྜལ་བཞི་བ A scripture chanted during *gsum pa'i* Sgrol ma.

ma Ni མ་ཉི 'The Mantra,' a short form of the six syllables: *OM ma Ni pad me hUM*, also referring to the *ma Ni* hall and the *ma Ni* wheel housed there containing 150 million *OM ma Ni pad me hUM* (Lce nag tshang hUM chen and Ye shes 'od zer sgrol ma, 2004:252).

ma zhang མ་ཞང Maternal uncle, maternal grandfather.

mchod me མཆོད་མེ 'Butter lamp,' butter, artificial butter or rapeseed oil placed in a brass or earthen container around a cotton wick.

Mchod rten dkar po མཆོད་རྟེན་དཀར་པོ (Baitasi 白塔寺) Baita Village, Wunan Township, Wuwei County, Kan su'u Province.

mda' sgro མདའ་སྒྲོ 'Fletching,' triangular wooden planks tied in groups of three along the length of *mda' shing*.

mda' shing མདའ་ཤིང 'Arrow wood,' a wood pole inserted into a *lab tse*.

Mdo མདོ A short form of Mdo bzhugs so.

Mdo bzhugs so མདོ་བཞུགས་སོ 'Sutra.'

Mdo khams མདོ་ཁམས (Duokang 多康) A toponym referring to A mdo and Khams.

Mdo khams smad མདོ་ཁམས་སྨད 'Lower Mdo khams.'

mdud pa མདུད་པ 'Knot,' knotted *kha btags* offered by lamas and *sngags pa* for protection.

mdzo མཛོ Cross between a yak bull and a cow.

me lha མེ་ལྷ 'Fire deity.'

Mgar rtse མགར་རྩེ (Guashize 瓜什则) Mgar rtse Village, Mgar rtse Township.

Mgo log མགོ་ལོག (Guoluo 果洛) Mgo log Prefecture, Mtsho sngon Province.

mi khang མི་ཁང 'People's room,' where families dined and congregated in winter.

Minhe 民和 Minhe Hui and Tu Autonomous County, Mtsho sngon Province.

mkha' 'gro མཁའ་འགྲོ 'Sky goer.'

mkhar མཁར 'Castle.'

Mnga' ris མངའ་རིས (Ali 阿里) Mnga' ris Prefecture, Tibet Autonomous Region.

mnol bsang མནོལ་བསང 'Contamination *bsang*,' crushed juniper leaves and such substances as *tsan dan dkar po* 'white sandalwood,' *tsan dan dmar po* 'red sandalwood' and *a ka ra* 'aloe wood' burned to purify objects and people with the smoke.

mnyam las khang མཉམ་ལས་ཁང (*shengchuandui* 生产对) 'Production brigade.'

mtshams khang མཚམས་ཁང 'Retreat house,' a retreat for nuns a kilometer east of Dkar rtse gdong.

mtshon sgo 'byed pa མཚོན་སྒོ་འབྱེད་པ 'Weapon door opening,' the first time a *lha pa* was cut or stabbed.

Mtsho rgan མཚོ་རྒན A deity venerated by 'Jam villagers.

Mtsho shar མཚོ་ཤར (Haidong 海东) Mtsho shar Region, Mtsho sngon Province.

Mtha' smig མཐའ་སྨིག The name of a mountain south of Rong bo and the deity who dwelt there.

mtho rgyugs མཐོ་རྒྱུགས (*gaokao* 高考) University entrance examination.

Mtho ri rgyal bo མཐོ་རི་རྒྱལ་བོ A name for Gnyan sras.

Mtsho byang མཚོ་བྱང (Haibei 海北) Mtsho byang Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Mtsho sngon Province.

Mtsho nub མཚོ་ནུབ (Haixi 海西) Mtsho nub Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Mtsho sngon Province.

Mtsho rong མཚོ་རོང One of the nine valleys in Reb gong.

Mtsho sngon མཚོ་སྔོན (Qinghai 青海) Mtsho sngon Province.

mu'u མུ་ཞུ (*mu* 亩) 0.067 hectares.

N

Na gzhon nags ན་གཞོན་ནགས 'Young Forest' on the west bank of the Dgu chu.

nangs bsang ནངས་བསང 'Morning *bsang*.'

ngag sgo 'byed pa ངག་སྒོ་འབྱེད་པ 'Mouth opening' or 'speech opening,' the first time a *lha pa* spoke while in trance.

nig nig nig ནིག་ནིག་ནིག 'Softly, softly softly,' a colloquial term indicating softness and movement, especially quivering.

nor bu ནོར་བུ 'Treasure.'

No'u chu ནོ་ཉུ་ཆུ 'No'u River' was located west of Ha ra pA thur.

No'u rong ནོ་ཉུ་རོང One of the nine valleys in Reb gong.

nus pa ནུས་པ 'Ability.'

nyog ཉོག Bean flour cake.

nywa lcibs ཉ་ཕྱིབས A strip of black cloth tied around the ankles, worn by *klu rol* players during *klu rol*.

O

'od dpag med kyi zhing sgrub འོད་དཔག་མེད་ཀྱི་ཞིང་སྒྲུབ An annual ceremony held by all *sngags pa* from Smad pa who congregated in a *sngags khang* from the twenty-fourth to the twenty-sixth days of the fifth lunar month. Rnying ma ba villages in Smad pa held the ceremony in turn.

P

'Phags skyes po འཕགས་སྐྱེས་པོ One of the Four Guardian Kings.

pho brang ཕོ་བྲང་ 'Palace.'

phra phab pa ཕྱ་ཕབ་པ A term for *lha phab pa*.

Phu wer ཕུ་ཝེར The Bon deity who Ge sar sacrifices to in 'Jam mgon mi pham pa's telling of the Epic of Ge sar.

Phyi tsho tshang ཕྱི་ཚོ་ཚང་ 'Back Clan,' one of two divisions of Ru 'og ma Khams po tshang comprised of fifteen households.

Phyug skor ཕྱུག་སྐོར་ (Xiuke 秀科) Phyug skor Village, Tho kyA.

phywa gshen pa ཕྱྭ་གཤེན་པ One of the Bon gyi theg pa rim dgu.

Ping'an 平安 Ping'an County, Mtsho shar Region, Mtsho sngon Province.

pra rten ཕྱ་རྟེན་ An older term for *lha pa*.

(*pra*) *sa na pa ta* (ཕྱ་)ས་ན་པ་ཏ Ritual for putting *lha pa* into trance (Sba gsal snang, ND:28-29).

R

ra ba ར་བ 'Enclosures,' the thirteen small *lab tse* on Lab tse Hill in Ha ra pA thur.

ra ma'i kha spu ར་མའི་ཁ་སྤུ A wildflower collected for *lnga ba'i tshes lnga*.

ras lwa རས་ལྭ An unlined cloth Tibetan robe.

rbod gtong རྦོད་གཏོང་ 'Curse.'

rde'u rigs རྡེའུ་རིགས་ Rectangular-shaped bread fried in rapeseed oil.

Rdo ris zur kha རྡོ་རིས་ཟུར་ཁ Place name in Reb sa Village.

rdo rje རྡོ་རྗེ A vajra.

Rdza dmar རྫ་དམར་ A mountain seventeen kilometers northwest of the 'Do ba Township govenment

offices and the deity who dwelt there (Tongren xianzhi bianzuan weiyuanhui, 2001:106).

rdza kha gong yag རྫ་ཁ་གོང་ཡག 'Rocky ptarmigan.'

Rdzong nang རྫོང་ནང (Zongnang 宗能) Rdzong nang Village, Tho kyA.

Reb gong རེབ་གོང (Regong/ Tongren 热贡/ 同仁) Reb gong County, Rma lho Prefecture. "Today the Reb gong area includes Tongren County, Rtse khog County, and the southern part of Thun te (Tongde) County of Mtsho lho Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture" (Dpal ldan bkra shis and Stuart, 1998:31).

Reb gong mchod rten རེབ་གོང་མཆོད་རྟེན 'Reb gong Stupa' located approximately six kilometers north of Ha ra pA thur.

Reb gong *sngags mang* རེབ་གོང་སྔགས་མང All Reb gong Rnying ma ba practitioners.

Reb gong *sngags mang gi chos thog* རེབ་གོང་སྔགས་མང་གི་ཆོས་ཐོག Any religious gathering of Rnying ma ba practitioners in Reb gong.

Reb kong རེབ་ཀོང Reb gong.

Reb sa རེབ་ས (Resa 热萨) Reb sa Village, Hor nag Township.

re lcag རེ་ལྕག A wildflower collected for *lnga ba'i tshes lnga*.

Rgyal bo རྒྱལ་བོ (Jiawu 加吾) Rgyal bo Township, Reb gong, and the class of *rgyal bo* deities belonging to Lha srin sde brgyad.

Rgya lo རྒྱ་ལོ 'Chinese Year' referring to the Chinese lunar New Year.

Rgyal po chen po bzhi རྒྱལ་པོ་ཆེན་པོ་བཞི 'Four Great Rgyal po,' the Four Guardian Kings.

Rgya mkhar རྒྱ་མཁར 'Chinese Castle,' the area below Rong bo Monastery inhabited by Han people.

Rgya thang རྒྱ་ཐང A myes KyA ting.

Rgya tshang mgar ba tshang རྒྱ་ཚང་མགར་བ་ཚང་ 'Chinese Blacksmith Family,' used by Ha ra pA thur villagers to refer to the Rgya tshang tshang.

Rgya tshang tshang རྒྱ་ཚང་ཚང་ A Ha ra pA thur clan with thirteen households.

rgyu རྒྱུ 'Property,' bride wealth.

rgyud pa mi gtsang རྒྱུད་པ་མི་གཙང་ 'Of unclean lineage,' a person with armpit odors or leprosy.

rgyud sde bzhi yi lha tshogs རྒྱུད་སྡེ་བཞི་ཡི་ལྷ་ཚོགས་ 'Deities of the four divisions of Tantra.' The four divisions of Tantra are *bya rgyud*, *spyod rgyud*, *rnal 'byor rgyud* and *bla med rnal 'byor rgyud* (Thob. nd.).

rgyugs lha རྒྱུགས་ལྷ 'Running deity,' a deity depicted mounted on a steed.

Ri lang *bcu gnyis* རི་ལང་བཅུ་གཉིས 'Twelve Ri lang,' a group of mountain deities bearing the name Ri lang 'to flee, to escape, in exile' (Goldstein, 2001:1035). We are aware of the names Ba rdzong ri lang, Dpung nge ri lang, Sa bdag sog po ri lang, Ko'u mol ri lang, Pe dpa' ri lang, Dar rgya ri lang, Tso shul ri lang, Dmag dpon pi tsi ri lang and Gyen 'dzi ri lang.

Ri rtsa རི་རྩ (Rizha 日扎) Ri rtsa Village, Tho kyA.

Rje 'bangs nyer lnga རྗེ་འབངས་ཉེར་ལྔ 'The twenty-five disciples of Padma 'byung gnas.'

Rje btsun 'phags ma sgrol ma la bstod pa bzhugs so རྗེ་བཙུན་འཕགས་མ་སྒྲོལ་མ་ལ་བསྟོད་པ་བཞུགས་སོ 'Praising Rje btsun 'phags ma sgrol ma,' a scripture chanted daily in Ha ra pA thur.

Rje do kha ma རྗེ་དོ་ཁ་མ A small image of Tsong kha pa enshrined in Spen dkar thang Monastery.

Rka sar རྐ་སར་ (Gashari 尕沙日) Rka sar Village, Gnyan thog Township.

rlung rta རླུང་རྟ 'Wind horses,' square pieces of multi-colored paper featuring such images as a horse carrying *nor bu*, tigers, lions, dragons and *khyung*.

rlung rta sde bzhi རླུང་རྟ་སྡེ་བཞི 'The four wind horse members,' considered to be *sa bdag* kings, wood-tiger, fire-snake, iron-ape and water-pig (Berounsky, 2004).

rma རྨ "*rMa chen spom ra* is believed to be accompanied by a train of three hundred sixty brother-deities, shortly called the three hundred sixty *rma*, which would suggest that the *rma* are perhaps a separate group of ancient local gods" (Nebesky-Wojkowitz, 1996:210).

Rma chen spom ra རྨ་ཆེན་སྤོམ་ར A myes Rma chen.

Rma lho རྨ་ལྷོ (Huangnan 黄南) Rma lhao Prefecture, Mtsho sngon Province.

rnam par len pa རྣམ་པར་ལེན་པ *Rnam par*, the short form of *rnam par rgyab pa*, 'complete demolition,' together with *len pa* 'removal' translates as 'removal of complete demolition.' This term described the action of finding and destroying curses.

Rma rgyal spom ra རྨ་རྒྱལ་སྤོམ་ར A name for A myes Rma chen.

rna cog gi sgor mo རྣ་ཅོག་གི་སྒོར་མོ 'Ear money,' money paid by a groom to female members of the bride's clan at a wedding party to persuade them to stop pulling the groom's ears.

Rnam thos sras རྣམ་ཐོས་སྲས (Duowenzi 多闻子) One of the Four Guardian Kings.

Rnying ma ba རྙིང་མ་པ (Ningmapai 宁玛派) The oldest of the four sects of Tibetan Buddhism.

Rong bo རོང་བོ (Longwu 隆务) Both Rong bo and Reb gong County Town.

Rtsam pa za sa'i zhing རྩམ་པ་ཟ་སའི་ཞིང་ 'Rtsam pa Eating Field,' fields given by the Rgya tshang tshang to a Bod skor family to grow barely.

Rta 'gyings རྟ་འགྱིངས་ Rta 'gyings Mountain and the deity who dwelt there.

rten rdzas རྟེན་རྫས་ 'Ritual objects.'

rtsa ba'i bla ma རྩ་བའི་བླ་མ་ 'Root lama.'

rtsa mi tshang རྩ་མི་ཚང་ A term for *bla rtsa mi tshang*.

rtsam pa རྩམ་པ་ Roasted barley flour often mixed with butter, cheese, sugar and tea, kneaded into dough and eaten.

Rtse khog རྩེ་ཁོག་ (Zeku 泽库) Rtse khog County, Rma lho Prefecture.

ru dar རུ་དར་ 'Flag,' a half-meter long triangular flag fastened to a meter long pole bearing a picture of a tiger or lion used during *klu rol*.

Ru gong ma རུ་གོང་མ་ A short form of Ru gong ma Sangs rgyas tshang.

Ru gong ma'i ra chag རུ་གོང་མའི་ར་ཆག་ The previous home of the Ru gong ma Sangs rgyas tshang.

Ru gong ma Sangs rgyas tshang རུ་གོང་མ་སངས་རྒྱས་ཚང་ A Ha ra pA thur clan with twenty-six households.

Ru 'og ma རུ་འོག་མ་ (Rihema 日合麻) Ru 'og ma portion of Ha ra pA thur Village.

Ru 'og ma Khams po tshang རུ་འོག་མ་ཁམས་པོ་ཚང་ A Ha ra pA thur clan with thirty-two households, sometimes called Lha khams po tshang, Ru 'og ma and Khams po tshang.

Rus lha རུས་ལྷ་ A deity enshrined in Klu mo rgyal's home, Thang ga. Also translates as 'lineage deity.'

S

sa bdag ས་བདག་ 'Land owner' or 'soil lord,' the original owner of a piece of land or a deity lord of the land.

sa bgod pa ས་བགོད་པ་ 'Land division,' a *klu rol* performance.

sa bon bsdu ba ས་བོན་བསྡུ་བ 'Seed collection,' a *klu rol* performance.

sa bon 'debs pa ས་བོན་འདེབས་པ 'Seed sowing,' a *klu rol* performance.

sa chu srung 'dzin ས་ཆུ་སྲུང་འཛིན (Shuibaozhan 水保站) 'Water Conservation Station.'

Sa dkar gdong drug ས་དཀར་གདོང་དྲུག Place that Ru 'og ma elders believed that the Ru 'og ma Khams po tshang originated.

Sa dkyil ས་དཀྱིལ (Siheji 四合吉) Sa dkyil Village, Rong bo.

Sangs rgyas sman lha སངས་རྒྱས་སྨན་ལྷ Medicine Buddha.

Sangs rgyas tshang སངས་རྒྱས་ཚང A short form of Ru gong ma Sangs rgyas tshang.

sa non pa ས་ནོན་པ 'Pressing soil,' the ritual performed by *lha pa* to locate disturbed pieces of land and pleasing deities associated with that land to cure disease.

Sba bzhed སྦ་བཞེད A short form of Sba bzhed ces bya ba las sba gsal snang gi bzhed pa bzhugs so written by Sba gsal snang.

sde dpon སྡེ་དཔོན 'Village leader.'

Sdong skam སྡོང་སྐམ (Dongganmu 东干木) Sdong skam Village, Tho kyA.

Seng gdong སེང་གདོང The goddess Seng gdong, the ritual *seng gdong* held in Ha ra pA thur from the twenty-seventh to the twenty-ninth of the eleventh lunar month and the scripture chanted during the ritual.

Seng ge gshong སེང་གེ་གཤོང (Wutun 吾屯) Seng ge gshong Village, Rong bo.

Se ra dur khrod སེ་ར་དུར་ཁྲོད A sky burial site near Se ra Monastery in Lha sa.

ser tho སེར་ཐོ 'Hail effigy,' a two meter tall figure with prominent male genitalia made of tree branches and placed on Ser tho Hill on the fifth day of the fifth lunar month. It held a bow and arrow pointed

toward the west. It was believed to resist hail storms.

sgar zhing སྒར་ཞིང་ 'Monastery fields,' fields once belonging to Spen dkar thang Monastery.

Sge'u steng སྐྱེའུ་སྟེང་ Sge'u steng Monastery, Tho kyA.

Sgo dmar སྒོ་དམར་ (Guomeri 郭么日) Sgo dmar Village, Gnyan thog Township.

sgo lha སྒོ་ལྷ་ 'Gate deity.'

Sgo mang སྒོ་མང་ A spring in Bya dkar lung Village.

Sgrol dkar bstod pa སྒྲོལ་དཀར་བསྟོད་པ་ 'Praising White Sgrol ma,' a scripture chanted daily in Ha ra pA thur.

Sgrol ma སྒྲོལ་མ་ The name of the deity Rje btsun 'phags ma sgrol ma and a short form of Rje btsun 'phags ma sgrol ma la bstod pa bzhugs so.

Sgrol ma dkar mo སྒྲོལ་མ་དཀར་མོ་ 'White Sgrol ma.'

Sgrol ma nyer gcig སྒྲོལ་མ་ཉེར་གཅིག་ 'Twenty-one manifestations of Sgrol ma.'

sha 'gal ཤ་འགལ་ 'Flesh feud' or 'vendetta' (Thob. nd.).

sha 'gel ཤ་འགེལ་ Probably a misspelling of *sha 'gal*.

Sham po ཤམ་པོ་ A mountain and the deity who dwelt there (Sba gsal snang, ND:28-29).

shan pa ཤན་པ་ 'Killer,' a deity who destroys the enemies of sentient beings.

Shan pa ra mgo ཤན་པ་རམགོ་ An attendant of Dpung nge ri lang enshrined in the Ha ra pA thur *dmag dpon*.

Shan pa rtsi thung ཤན་པ་རྩི་ཐུང་ An attendant of Dpung nge ri lang enshrined in the Ha ra pA thur *dmag dpon*.

Sha nye dud kha brgyad cu ཤ་ཉེ་དུད་ཁ་བརྒྱད་ཅུ་ Sha nye tshang.

Sha nye tshang ཤ་ཉེ་ཚང་ A Ha ra pA thur clan with eight households.

Sha sbrang ཤ་སྦྲང་ (Xialang 夏浪), Sha sbrang Village, Gnyan thog Township.

sher rtsi ཤེར་རྩི་ Roasted barley or wheat used for offerings.

shi chos ཤི་ཆོས་ 'Death charity,' a funeral.

shing rgyan ཤིང་རྒྱན་ A wood cylinder pointed at one end and cut in half lengthwise, used by *lha pa* to divine the mountain deities' satisfaction with *klu rol* performances. Also used to make divinations.

Shi nye tshang ཤི་ཉེ་ཚང་ A vanished Ha ra pA thur clan.

sho ra ra ཤོ་ར་ར་ A *klu rol* performance. We were unable to translate the name.

shog kha ཤོག་ཁ་ "Group, clique, faction, party, sector" (Goldstein, 2001:1104). "Unit, group, clique, sector" (Thob. nd.). Also, *shog pa*. Traditionally many villages were grouped into larger bodies called *shog kha*. This grouping was evident as the responsiblity for managing the Rgya lo *smon lam* in Rong bo Monastery rotated from one *shog kha* to another annually.

shug chu ཤུག་ཆུ་ 'Juniper water,' juniper branches boiled in water *lha pa* used for purification by drinking and washing in it.

skar hub སྐར་ཏུབ་ 'Burial noodles,' noodles prepared by the deceased person's family for Ha ra pA thur villagers the night of cremation.

sku khog སྐུ་ཁོག་ An honorific form of *lus khog*.

sku rten pa སྐུ་རྟེན་པ་ 'Body base man,' trance mediums possessed by such deities as Gnas chung.

Skyabs 'gro སྐྱབས་འགྲོ་ 'Going for Refuge,' a short form of Skyabs 'gro bzhugs so, a scripture chanted daily in Ha ra pA thur.

Skya ga'i nyag ga སྐྱ་གའི་ཉག་གཱ་ 'Skya ga Notch' was south of Reb gong.

skya shog སྐྱ་ཤོག་ Bread made of flattened dough smeared with turmeric, cut into squares and fried.

skyer ma སྐྱེར་མ་ A wildflower collected for *lnga ba'i tshes lnga*.

skyes lha སྐྱེས་ལྷ 'Natal deity,' the main deity venerated in the village where a person was born.

skyes lha'i lab tse སྐྱེས་ལྷའི་ལབ་ཙེ 'Natal deity's *lab tse*' referring the Ha ra pA thur Village *lab tse*.

Skyid tshang སྐྱིད་ཚང (Jicang 吉仓) Skyid tshang Village, Rgyal bo Township.

slog pa སྐྱོག་པ A sheepskin-lined Tibetan robe.

slog rgyag pa སྐྱོག་རྒྱག་པ 'Plowing,' a *klu rol* performance.

slong chang སྐྱོང་ཚང 'Engagement liquor,' liquor presented by the groom's family to the bride's family for engagement.

Smad pa སྨད་པ (Maba 麻巴) Smad pa Township was established in 1956. The name was changed to Hongqi Dui or 'Red Flag Community' in 1958. The name Smad pa was reapplied in 1984. Smad pa Township and Tho kyA were combined and named Tho kyA in 2001 (http://baike.baidu.com/view/336849.htm). The region was often referred to as Smad pa in 2008.

Sman ri སྨན་རི A mountain 17.5 kilometers southwest of Mgar rtse Township government offices (Tongren xianzhi bianzuan weiyuanhui, 2001:104) where A myes Sman ri dwelt.

sngags khang སྔགས་ཁང 'Mantra hall.'

sngags mang gi chos thog སྔགས་མང་གི་ཆོས་ཐོག Any religious gathering of Rnying ma ba practitioners in Reb gong.

sngags pa སྔགས་པ A tantric practitioner.

sngags pa gsar ba སྔགས་པ་གསར་བ 'New *sngags pa*,' a division of Rnying ma ba practitioners in Reb gong living west of the Dgu chu and centered in Dgon la kha Monastery, Nya lung Township.

sngags pa rnying ba སྔགས་པ་རྙིང་བ 'Old *sngags pa*,' a division of Rnying ma ba practitioners in Reb gong living

east of the Dgu chu and centered in Khyung dgon Monastery, Spyang lung Village, Chu khog Township.

Sngags sa tshang gi 'du khang སྔགས་ས་ཚང་གི་འདུ་ཁང་ An assembly hall in Ko'u sde Village, Chu khog Township.

Sngo la g.yu rtse སྔོ་ལ་གཡུ་རྩེ Gnyan rje sngo la g.yu rtse.

Sngun tsho tshang སྔུན་ཚོ་ཚང་ 'Front Clan,' one of two divisions of Ru 'og ma Khams po tshang comprised of seventeen households.

snyan shal སྙན་ཤལ 'Earlobes,' bolts of silk offered by villagers by hanging them inside the shrine.

Sog rgya སོག་རྒྱ (Bao'an zu 保安族) 'Mongolian Chinese.'

sooM sooM che'o སོཾ་སོཾ་ཆེའོ Onomatopoeia for a cry praising deities.

Spen dkar thang སྤེན་དཀར་ཐང Spen dkar thang Monastery, Tho kyA.

***spra* (*pra*) *bstan*(*rten*)** སྤྲ་(ཕྱ)་བསྟན་(རྟེན) *Pra rten*.

spra se na སྤྲ་སེ་ན Phonetically similar to *bra se naM*.

spyan gzigs སྤྱན་གཟིགས All the offerings placed on an altar in a monastery or temple.

Spyan mi bzang སྤྱན་མི་བཟང One of the Four Guardian Kings.

Shehuizhuyi Xinnongcun 社会主义新农村 'Socialist's New Countryside.'

Srang mdo སྲང་མདོ 'Rear Avenue,' the place where *gsur mang* was held.

Sras mchog Mtho ri rgyal bo སྲས་མཆོག་མཐོ་རི་རྒྱལ་བོ Gnyan sras.

srin po སྲིན་པོ A class of deities belonging to Lha srin sde brgyad.

srung skor སྲུང་སྐོར 'Protection amulet.'

Stag lung སྟག་ལུང Short form of A myes Stag lung.

ston chos སྟོན་ཆོས 'Autumn chanting session' was held by *sngags pa rnying ba* from Gling rgya, Nags rgya, Ri

rtsa, Lha khang, 'Jam, Ha ra pA thur, Byang chub, Stag yan, Bya dkar lung, Nyang and Dar grong villages, Tho kyA; Phye dri, Sa skor, Ha lung, Ngo mo, Sdong nge, Sman 'tshong, Gyang ri, Rgyal bo sgang and Chu ca villages, Rgyal bo Township and Spyang lung and Lcang skya villages, Chu khog Township. The *sngags pa* gathered annually in the Chu ca Village *sngags khang*, Rgyal bo Township, from the twenty-first to the twenty-fourth days of the ninth lunar month.

stong dpon སྟོང་དཔོན་ A short form of 'Jam stong dpon.

sug smel སུག་སྨེལ་ 'Cardamom,' one of the six precious substances.

Sum pa སུམ་པ་ Bod skor Village.

Sum pa'i ru སུམ་པའི་རུ་ An historical subdivision of Gtsang. The others were G.yas ru and Ru lag.

su tshar སུ་ཚར་ Colloquial term for a Tibetan robe with artificial lining.

T

thab ཐབ་ 'Stove,' any stove, including one made for cremation

thab bsang ཐབ་བསང་ 'Stove *bsang*,' *bsang* burned at the base of the stove to purify it.

thab lha ཐབ་ལྷ་ 'Stove deity,' the deity who inhabited stoves.

thal khem ཐལ་ཁེམ་ 'Ash shovel.'

thang chu ཐང་ཆུ་ 'Pine sap.'

Thang ga ཐང་ག་ (Tangka 唐卡) The Thang ga portion of Ha ra pA thur. *Thang ga* were also printed, painted or appliqué deity images.

Thang ga tshang ཐང་ག་ཚང་ A Ha ra pA thur clan with twelve households.

Thang lha ཐང་ལྷ A mountain deity residing on Gnyan chen thang lha Mountain (Nebesky-Wojkowitz, 1996: 205-209).

theb tse ཐེབ་ཙེ Brass bowls for water offerings.

The bu ཐེ་བུ (Tiewu 铁吾) The bu Village, Rong bo.

the'u rang ཐེའུ་རང A spirit inhabiting some homes thought to bring a family wealth.

The'u rong ཐེའུ་རོང One of the nine valleys in Reb gong.

Thig mo nang ཐིག་མོ་ནང (Tashan 塌山) An area between Dkar rtse gdong and Seng ge gshong villages.

thod dkar lab tse ཐོད་དཀར་ལབ་ཙེ Tree branches tied with wool and small pieces of cloth inserted in the *lab tse* on the eighth day of the first lunar month in Ha ra pA thur. Also called *lab tse*.

Tho kyA ཐོ་ཀྱ (Bao'an 保安) Tho kyA Village, Tho kyA Town and the entire administrative area of Tho kyA, incorporating the former Tho kyA and Smad pa townships.

thug pa ཐུག་པ Long noodles served with beef or mutton and onion soup.

Thugs rje chen po bcu gcig zhal ཐུགས་རྗེ་ཆེན་པོ་བཅུ་གཅིག་ཞལ 'Eleven-faced Great Compassionate One.'

thung ri ཐུང་རི A short form of *thung ri phra mo*.

thung ri phra mo ཐུང་རི་ཕྲ་མོ The de-possessed *lha pa*.

Thun te ཐུན་ཏེ (Tongde 同德) Thun te County, Mtsho lho Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture.

ting phor ཏིང་ཕོར Bronze bowls used for making water offerings.

tog lha ཏོག་ལྷ 'Top deity,' a pole featuring a flag and *thang ga* of a mountain deity near the top carried by *klu rol* players.

tsan dan ཙན་དན 'Sandalwood.'

tsha ཚ Short form of *tsha bo* 'grandson' or *tsha mo* 'granddaughter.'

tsha gsur ཚ་གསུར་ Offering made by burning only roasted barley flour.

tshang ཚང་ Honorific term added after the names of lamas and mountain deities.

tsha ru ཚ་རུ A lambskin-lined Tibetan robe.

tshes bcu ཚེས་བཅུ 'Tenth day,' a ritual held monthly in Ru 'og ma on the tenth day of each lunar month.

tshi len bod bzo ཚི་ལེན་བོད་བཟོ 'Tibetan shirt,' a shirt with one button underneath the chin, one in front of the right shoulder and one underneath the right armpit.

tshogs sha ཚོགས་ཤ 'Gathering meat,' meat offered at gatherings attended by monks and *sngags pa*.

Tsi'u dmar po ཙིའུ་དམར་པོ "*Tsi'u dmar po* and the other members of the *'Bar ba spun bdun* group are regarded …as leaders of all *btsan* demons, one of the most important classes of Tibetan demoniacal deities" (Nebesky-Wojkowitz, 1996:175).

tu'u ཏུའུ A *klu rol* performance. We were unable to translate the name.

W

wa chu ཝ་ཆུ 'Drainage spout.'

wa mchu ཝ་མཆུ Another spelling of *wa chu*.

Wa rjes ཝ་རྗེས 'Fox Trace,' fields east of Thang ga.

X

Xincheng 新城 'New Castle,' one of three portions of Tho kyA Town.

Y

Ya rong ཡ་རོང One of the nine valleys in Reb gong.

Ye mtho ཡེ་མཐོ A short form of A myes Ye mtho.

yi dam ཡི་དམ 'Tutelary deity,' a personal protector of Buddhist practice and guide to enlightenment (Thob. nd.).

yi dbang lha'i bka' babs ཡི་དབང་ལྷའི་བཀའ་བབས 'Commanding descent into the [trance medium's] mind.'

yi dwags ཡི་དྭགས 'Hungry ghost.'

yul gyi dge bcu ཡུལ་གྱི་དགེ་བཅུ 'Ten virtues of an area' or *sa'i dge bcu* 'ten virtues of land:' land for 1) housing and 2) cultivation, water for 3) drinking and 4) irrigation, grass both 5) near and 6) far, wood for 7) housing and 8) fuel, stone for 9) housing and 10) stoves.

Yul gyi lha gnyan chen po ཡུལ་གྱི་ལྷ་གཉན་ཆེན་པོ Gnyan brjid gong sngon.

Yul 'khor srung ཡུལ་འཁོར་སྲུང One of the Four Guardian Kings.

Yul shul ཡུལ་ཤུལ (Yushu 玉树) Yul shul Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Mtsho sngon Province.

Yum 'bum pa ཡུམ་འབུམ་པ '100,000 Yum' was a scripture chanted annually by the Ru gong ma tshang.

Yum chen ཡུམ་ཆེན Honorific term for deities' wives.

Yum chen Ma ma lu gu ཡུམ་ཆེན་མ་མ་ལུ་གུ Gnyan Ma ma le gu.

Yum chen Ma ma lag dgu ཡུམ་ཆེན་མ་མ་ལག་དགུ A spelling of Yum chen Ma ma lu gu.

Z

za khang ཟ་ཁང 'Dining room,' with a flour box and chopping board, functioned more as a kitchen than a dining area.

zhang lha ཞང་ལྷ The maternal uncle's natal deity.

zhi khro chen mo ཞི་ཁྲོ་ཆེན་མོ 'Great peaceful wrathful one,' the only ceremony held by both *sngags pa gsar ba* and *sngags rnying ba* in Reb gong annually from

the twentieth to the twenty-third days of the fifth lunar month.

zhing sgrub ཞིང་སྒྲུབ A short form of *'od dpag med kyi zhing sgrub*.

Zhong hwa ཞོང་ཧྭ (Xunhua 循化) Zhong hwa Salar Autonomous County, Mtsho shar Region.

Zhong za ཞོང་ཟ A Gling rgya Village clan once in conflict with the Ru gong ma Sangs rgyas tshang.

Zhon 'phong ཞོན་འཕོང The colloquial term for Zho 'ong or Zho 'phang, referring to Zho 'ong dpyi Township, Reb gong County.

Zho 'ong ཞོ་འོང Zho 'ong Township, Reb gong.

Zho 'ong dpyi ཞོ་འོང་དཔྱི (Shuangpengxi 双朋西) Zho 'ong dpyi Township, Reb gong County.

Zi ling ཟི་ལིང (Xining 西宁) The capital city of Mtsho sngon Province.

zo ཟོ Colloquial term for *zo ba* 'bucket' used for carrying water and churning milk

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